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MODERNITIES

MODERNITIES

BY

HORACE B. SAMUEL

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PREFACE

THE ten studies which constitute this volume are devoted to individuals who are held out as being reasonably characteristic of that modern movement of the last and present century which started with the French Revolution. At any rate, they were all modern once. For the spirit of modernity enjoys, like the priest-god of the ancient grove, only a temporary reign, and is speedily killed by its inevitable successor.

It is somewhat difficult to find any common denominator for the subjects of these studies. The essays must be left largely to speak for themselves. If, however, an attempt were to be made to pronounce of what the spirit of modernity really consists, one might suggest that it is a spirit of energy, of fearlessness in analysis, whose sole *raison d'être* and whose sole ideal is actual life itself.

The studies on Miss Marie Corelli and Herr Wedekind are here published for the first time. Those on Disraeli, Heine, Stendhal, Schnitzler, Strindberg, the Futurists, and Verhaeren have appeared as articles in the *Fortnightly Review;* while the essay on Nietzsche's "Genealogy of Morals" was first published in the *English Review.* I have consequently pleasure in expressing my thanks and

acknowledgments to Mr. W. L. Courtney and Mr. Austin Harrison for their courtesy in allowing these articles to be reproduced in their present form. I have also to thank the editor of the *New Statesman* for permission to republish my translation from Marinetti's, "The Pope's Monoplane."

I have made additions to the essays on Schnitzler and the Futurists with a view to incorporating some reference to the more recent works of Dr. Schnitzler and M. Marinetti.

HORACE B. SAMUEL.

TEMPLE, *October* 1913.

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MODERNITIES

STENDHAL

THE COMPLEAT INTELLECTUAL

"I ONLY write for a hundred readers, and of those unhappy, amiable, charming creatures without either hypocrisy or morality whom I should like to please, I only know one or two."

On the assumption that with the natural growth of the population, "the happy few" for whom Stendhal wrote have sufficiently multiplied in this country to render it likely that a reasonable number of readers will possess these requisite qualifications, it becomes relevant to give both some analysis and some appreciation of a man who is perhaps the most perfect type of the "intellectual" that Europe has yet produced.

For Stendhal was an intellectual in the fullest sense of the term. Neither a recluse scholar nor a rabid doctrinaire, but a man of the world and of action, of brain, heart, and sensibility, he sought and to a large extent found in the intellect an energetic servant, by whose faithful escort he could sally forth on that "hunt of happiness," which led him in his variegated career from the field of battle to the bowers of love, and from the high plateaux of reverie to the meticulous *terre à terre* observations of psychological science.

Henri Beyle was born in 1783, in Grenoble in Dauphiné, a town whose hidebound provincialism he hated consistently from his childhood to his death.

"His childhood," to quote from his own autobiography, "was a continual period of unhappiness and of hate and of the sweets of a vengeance which was always helpless." Loving his mother, according to his somewhat pathetic boast, with a man's passion, he lost her at the age of seven. On being told that God had taken her away, he conceived with immediate logic an implacable hatred against that Deity who had deprived him of the being whom he loved most in the world, a hatred which, turning into momentary gratitude on the occasion of the death of his *bête noire*, his Aunt Séraphie, was finally merged in the chilly negation of the honest atheist. Inasmuch as to the quality of logic Stendhal added those of rebelliousness and imagination, it is not surprising that even in childhood his relations should have been inharmonious with his father, a royalist lawyer situated on the borderland between the bourgeoisie and the gentry. The royalism of his father immediately sufficed to turn Henri into the reddest of republicans. The execution of Louis XVI filled his childish heart with holy glee, and the guillotining of two royalist priests at Grenoble affected him with an elation which, if solitary, was for that very reason all the more genuine. So hot indeed was his republican ardour that he even forged an official order requiring his enlistment in a body of cadets. But although he was unappreciative of his father, whom he would refer to in his diaries and letters by the almost equally offensive synonyms of "bastard" and "Jesuit," he none the less manifested the deepest affection for his maternal grandfather, M. Gagnon, a Voltairean doctor of lively

intellect and genial disposition, and for the cook and the butler of the paternal house.

The child soon began to stimulate by books his naturally precocious imagination, stealing in his thirst for knowledge those volumes which the solicitude or conventionalism of his father deemed it inexpedient for him to read. From *La Nouvelle Heloïse* in particular he would appear to have derived imaginative transports far transcending the joys of a prosaic reality. But he had conceived an early aversion to poetry by reason of an awful poem by some Jesuit about a fly that got drowned in a cup of milk. The reading of Molière, however, dispelled the unpleasant association, and his early ambition became crystallised into going to Paris and writing a comedy. For apart from the magnetic attraction of the metropolis itself, Grenoble exacerbated his nerves. Unappreciated at home, he found himself, with the exception of one or two genuine friendships, solitary and unpopular at school among those masters and schoolfellows whom he already despised. It is interesting to remember, parenthetically, that even when a schoolboy he fought a duel, and boldly faced the fire of what subsequently turned out to have been an unloaded pistol by concentrating his gaze on a distant rock. His intellectual ability carried all before him, and he found in mathematics a loophole of escape from his provincial prison. Coming out top in the examinations he obtained a bourse at the École Polytechnique at the age of sixteen, and was sent to Paris with instructions to place himself under the protection of M. Daru, a relative of the family and the holder of a ministerial appointment. By this time his erotic ambitions were beginning to formulate themselves with comparative definiteness. He had already experienced a passion for a Mdlle. Kably, a local actress,

which while never attaining a more advanced stage than that of inquiring the way to her lodgings, was none the less violent. Anyway, when the boy went to Paris he had finally decided to live up to the best of his ability to the Don Juan ideal.

His first sojourn at Paris, however, surprised both himself and his parents. With considerable obstinacy he refused to attend the Polytechnique and set himself to study privately in his own rooms. But the first essay at the single life proved a fiasco. No dashing romances coloured his solitary existence, while he was either too nervous or too refined to sully his soul with mere mercenary pleasure. He became dreamy and ill, and was eventually taken charge of by the Darus. In the pompous officialdom of this family his health recovered, but his spirit rebelled. He complains bitterly that he not only had to sleep in the house but also to dine with the family. He none the less knit a firm friendship with his cousin Martial Daru, a brainless and amiable youth who subsequently at Milan and at Brunswick taught him the elementary rules of amoristic etiquette.

The Marengo campaign gave him an opportunity of practising that Napoleonic worship which was his one and only religion. The influence of the Darus procured him a commission, and the passage of the St. Bernard was one of the landmarks of his life. He drank to the full the intoxication of victory which attended the entry into Milan of the youthful army, and conceived for the Countess Angela Pietragrua, "a sublime wanton à la Lucrezia Borgia," a passion which ten years subsequently was duly rewarded. The Milan period was, according to that epitaph which he penned himself, "the finest in his life." "He adored music and literary renown, set great store by the art of giving a good blow with the sabre and

was wounded in the foot by a thrust received in a duel. He was aide-de-camp to Lieutenant-General Michaud. He distinguished himself. He was the happiest and probably the maddest of men when on the conclusion of the peace the minister of war ordered the subaltern aides-de-camp to return to their regiments."

Returning to Grenoble on furlough, he fell in love with Mdlle. Victorine Bigillon, the sister of one of his best friends, whom he suddenly followed to Paris, although his leave would appear to have been limited to Grenoble. Reprimanded by the authorities he sent in his resignation, and "madder than ever started to study with the view of becoming a great man." His experiences, subjective and objective, during this period are described in his journal with a detail, a lucidity, an honesty which are worthy of some mention. For we see now officially scheduled and officially annotated all those heterogeneous qualities which made up the sum of this man's psychology; his rigid intellectualism, his sentimentality, his ambition, his artistic enthusiasm, his constant flow of analytical energy (directed now against the external world, now against himself, yet scarcely for a single moment losing itself in a complete abandon), his love of witty conversation, whether his own or that of others, the sweep of his intellectual ideals, his intolerance of bores and fools, that apprehensive self-consciousness which so often made him the dupe of the fear of being duped, his exuberant *joie de vivre*, and "that love of glory and sensibility which are only for the *intimes* friends."

And extraordinarily stimulating are the reflections, charmingly interspersed with English phrases, in this breviary of intellectual egoism, where the *I* and the *Me* enter into a Holy Alliance in their heroic con-

spiracy against the rest of the world. It was mainly this self-consciousness which induced Beyle deliberately to set himself to become a psychologist. "Nearly all the misfortunes of life," writes our twenty-year-old philosopher, "come from the false notions we have concerning that which happens to us. Must know men thoroughly." And how he scolds himself when he fails to live up to his ideal, and when "his accursed mania for being brilliant results in his being more occupied in making a deep impression than in guessing others." And so it is that he reflects, "what a fool I am not to have the knack of drawing out each man to tell his story, which might prove so useful to me," and that the man, who was subsequently to style himself by profession "an observer of the human heart" developed that "universal desire to know all that passes within a man." Though, however, his love of psychology was thus, as we have seen, to some extent a case of reaction from his own nervousness and of externalised introspection, it is impossible to deny the purity of his intellectual enthusiasm. At an age when even the chastest of prose writers may well be pardoned for wallowing in the debauchery of purple patches, he inscribes in his journal that the sole quality in style is lucidity. It was this deeply rooted abhorrence of floridity and ostentation that on a subsequent occasion nearly induced him to fight a duel with a man who had praised unduly the well known "la cime indeterminable des arbres" of Chateaubriand, that *bête noire* of Stendhal's of whom he prophesies in English, "This man shall not outlive his century." In the sphere of philosophy, characteristically enough his logical and mathematical turn of mind embraced with natural love and facility the materialism of the French sceptics.

"Helvetius opened wide to him the doors of the world," and he became on terms of affectionate friendship with the aged philosopher Destutt Tracy. So radical indeed was Stendhal's philosophic bias, that on one occasion, feeling presumably more studious than amorous, he neglects an assignation with the lady whom he was pursuing, to plunge with even greater gusto into a hundred pages of Adam Smith. Though, too, he habitually worked twelve hours a day, he would appear to have cut a frequent figure in both those formal and Bohemian sets of the capital which offered such refreshing contrasts and facilities to artistic young men.

His love for Victorine proved unreciprocated. There followed innocuous passages with a respectable demi-vierge, referred to in the journal as Adèle of the Gate. But Stendhal found his chief distraction in that society of authors, men of the world, and actresses whom he met at the house of Dugazon, a celebrated teacher of theatrical elocution. In this variegated set, where the mutual relations and complications of the various members provided a chronic source of interest and speculation, Stendhal met a young mother, named Mélanie Guilbert (the Louason of the journal), "a charming actress who had the most refined sentiments and to whom I never gave a sou." To this lady Stendhal set himself to lay a siege, which was eventually successful after a quite unnecessary duration.

The demeanour of Stendhal in society is highly instructive. A man of such abnormal sensitiveness that "the least thing moved him and made the tears come to his eyes," he encased himself in an "irony which was imperceptible to the vulgar," and, posing with marked success as both a cynic and a roué, notes with interest "the terrifying effect which his

particular kind of wit produced on society." But if his deliberate brilliancies won him respect rather than popularity, they certainly consolidated his own self-estimation. "Maximum of wit in my life—Je me suis toujours vu aller mais sans gêne pour cela," runs one of these honest confidences which he made to himself, "without lying, without deceiving himself, with pleasure, like a letter to a friend." He needed, however, the audience of a salon to put him on his mettle, and would appear, at any rate during this period, to have been somewhat ineffective in *tête-à-tête*. His journal records a lamentable succession of muddled opportunities, of occasions when he was too natural to observe his companion with sufficient acumen, and of occasions when he was not natural enough. It was the latter characteristic, however, which predominated, and even though the emotion of his love was genuine, its expression was a bookish and theatrical formulation of an already rehearsed ideal, directed quite as much to the critical approbation of his own consciousness as to the actual object of his wooing. Yet the full gusto of a rich *joie de vivre* palpitates in this incessant cerebration. Time after time do we come upon the entry that such and such a day was the happiest in his life. And if at times "his only distraction was to observe his own state, it was none the less a great one." His very sensibility becomes a source of gratification, and he will congratulate himself that he has perhaps lived more in a day than many of his more stolid friends will live in the whole of their life. The financial problem pressed irksomely upon him at this period, and, combining business and sentiment, he obtained a position in a house at Marseilles, in which town Louason had obtained an engagement. Whether however because of parental pressure or because the distractions of business had

cured him of his passion, he soon left Marseilles for Grenoble, and subsequently returned to Paris.

The campaigns of 1806 to 1809 offered new scope to the ambition of Beyle, who always rose successfully to practical emergencies and was, as he tells us himself, "most simple and most natural in the greatest dangers." He was present at the battle of Jena, came several times into personal contact with Napoleon, and discharged with singular efficiency the fiscal administration of the state of Brunswick.

The next landmark in his life, however, is his passion for the wife of his relative, the punctilious but aged M. Daru, a passion the various nuances of which are faithfully recorded in those sections of his journal headed "The Life and Sentiments of Silencious Harry," "Memoirs of my life during my amour for the Gräfin P——y," the narrative of the intrigue between Julien and Mathilde in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, and the posthumous fragment entitled "Le Consultation de Banti," a piece of methodical deliberation on the pressing question, "*Dois-je ou ne dois-je pas avoir la duchesse?*" which, it is believed, is quite unparalleled in the whole history of eroticism. For with his peculiar faculty of driving his intellect and his heart in double harness, he analyses the pros and cons of the erotic and ethical situation, the qualifications and defects of the lady with all the documentary coldness of a Government report. His diary during this period is so delightfully honest as to justify quotations: "Tuesday, 18th April 1810, 1st day of Longchamps. On the whole I think that I love the Countess P——y a little." "10th August, I have proved by an evidence the truth of my principles about rousing love in the heart of a woman." "The 4th August. I was reading the excellent essay of Hume upon the feudal government from two till half-past four o'clock;

during this time she wanted my presence; *au retour* she cannot say a word without speaking of me or to me. J'eus le tort de ne pas hasarder quelque entreprise. Mais je le répète j'ai trop de sensibilité pour avoir jamais du talent dans l'art de Lovelace!"

Stendhal would appear to have treated this particular liaison rather as a polite routine of social amenities than as a serious passion. How refreshing is his account of the tedium of the relationship: "At Paris I have no time for working to Letellier [a mediocre comedy in verse which was never finished], I have here nothing but my passion for C. Palfy; 'tis a month that I reproach to myself the money that I spent without pleasure of mind into those walls."

Towards the autumn of 1811 Stendhal journeyed to Milan, his favourite town in Europe whose citizenship he arrogated in his self-written epitaph. Renewing his acquaintance with the Countess Pietragrua, for whom he had languished in dumb nervousness on his first visit to Milan ten years past, he took an especial joy in compensating for his previous clumsiness by displaying the easy brilliancy of the man of the world. And then on the eve of his departure from Milan he writes in English—"I was, I believe, in love." "Après un combat moral fort serieux où j'ai joué le malheur et jusque le désespoir, elle est à moi onze heures et demi. Je pars de Milan à une heure et demie le 22 septembre 1811."

In 1812 Beyle served in the Moscow campaign, having obtained a position in the commissariat department. It is characteristic that he should have kept his nerve during the whole of that panic-stricken retreat, shaving every day, and repelling with considerable sangfroid and bravery an attack by the enemy on a hospital of wounded. Disgusted by the

Restoration, he settled in Milan in 1814, resumed his relationship with Mme. Angelina Pietragrua, who would appear to have systematically deceived him, and lived generally the life of the dilettante and the man of letters.

In 1814 he published his first work, *The Lives of Hadyn and Mozart* par Louis Alexander Bombet. This pseudonym is partly due to Beyle's habitual mania for anonymity and partly to the consciousness that the substantial portion of the work had been coolly plagiarised from Carpani. Nor do any morbid pangs of conscience appear to have ruffled the serenity of the author, who found a precedent for his action in the plagiarisms of Molière and a subsequent justification in the money that he obtained. Emboldened indeed by his success he published in London, in 1817, a series of travel sketches, *Rome, Naples, and Florence,* which owed in some places an unacknowledged debt to the *Italian Travels* of Goethe. Yet even so, viewed as a whole the book possesses a richness of material, a raciness of observation, a joy of journeying, a spontaneity of verve which give it a high rank among travel literature and make it eminently readable even at the present day. Less a guide-book than a personal narrative, it describes the actual life of the period as actually lived by a man who plumed himself at thirty on still retaining all the folly of his youth. The author was an enthusiast for the theatre, a devotee of the ballet, and a keen wagerer of those exquisite ices which formed one of the chief allurements of the Scala Theatre. An enthusiastic anti-clerical and an eager reader of forbidden political plays at midnight côteries, he yet feels on visiting the Church of the Jesuits "a little of that respect which even the most criminal power inspires when it has done great things." And

how simply natural is the following confession of a traveller's faith: "I experience a sensation of happiness on my journeys which I have found nowhere else, even in the most happy days of my ambition." In the same year, 1817, Stendhal published his *History of Painting in Italy*. This book is remarkable, not so much by its purely æsthetic criticism as by the application to the sphere of artistic criticism of those theories of heredity, climate, and environment which were afterwards to be so brilliantly exploited at the hands of Taine. Some mention should also be made of that simplicity of lyric fervour which distinguishes the extremely fine dedication to Napoleon.

In 1821 much to his disgust, Stendhal, accused, and apparently quite unjustly, of being a French spy, was forced to leave Milan. This exile was all the more irksome as Stendhal's amoristic history had now reached its great climax. If Louason had constituted the initiation of his youth, Mme. Daru the acme of his social achievement, and the Countess Pietragrua the incarnate realisation of his adventurous search for ideal beauty, it was in Mèthilde, Countess Dembowska, that his mature heart found a passion which though always ungratified remained none the less grand. It is instructive to observe how honest was the love, how deep the devotion of this official rake for "une femme que j'adorais, qui m'aimait et qui ne s'est jamais donnée à moi." Particularly significant is it that this man, whose cynicism had gained for him the sobriquet of Don Juan, should have condemned himself to a three years' fidelity that thereby he might become more worthy of that "âme angélique cachée dans un si beau corps qui quittait la vie en 1825." But it is even more interesting to notice how there mingles with this perfectly genuine attachment the most morbid self-consciousness and fear of ridicule:

"Le pire des malheurs, m'écriais-je, serait que ces hommes si secs, mes amis au milieu desquels je vais vivre, devinâssent ma passion pour une femme que je n'ai pas eue. Cette peur mille fois répétée a été dans le fait la principe dirigeante de ma vie pendant dix ans. C'est par là que je suis venu à avoir de l'esprit, chose qui était la butte de mes mépris à Milan en 1818 quand j'aimais Mèthilde."

In 1822 Stendhal published in Paris that book *De l'Amour* which he had composed at odd moments during his sojourn at Milan. Thought by the author to be his most important work, and deemed worthy by the public of a total purchase of seventeen copies, the work possesses even at the present day considerable claims upon the attention. For it possesses the unique characteristic of being a treatise on the sexual emotion written by an author who was at the same time an acute psychologist and a brilliant man of the world, who could test abstract theories by concrete practice, and could co-ordinate what he had felt in himself and observed in others into broad general principles. While we do not propose to enter into a detailed analysis of this work, which occupies more than four hundred pages of close print, we may perhaps mention the author's fourfold division of love into "amour-passion, amour-goût, amour physique, amour de vanité."

We would also refer to just a few of the innumerable maxims with which the book is studded, as typical of that naïvely subtle simplicity which is so characteristic of our author:

"L'amour c'est avoir du plaisir à voir, toucher, sentir par tous les sens et d'aussi près que possible un objet aimable et qui nous aime"—"l'amant erre sans cesse entre ces idées: 1. Elle a toutes les perfections. 2. Elle m'aime. 3. Comment faire pour obtenir d'elle la plus grande preuve d'amour possible?" —"Tout l'art d'aimer se réduit, ça me semble, à dire

exactement à quels degrés d'ivresse le moment comporte, c'est-à-dire en d'autres termes à écouter son âme."

And how curious is the following phrase where the point of view of this cynical roué seems for once quite in accord with that of the more ladylike of our lady novelists: "Le plus grand bonheur qui puisse donner l'amour c'est le premier serrement de main d'une femme qu'on aime."

But the philosophical breadth of the author is perhaps best manifested by that spirit of comparative erotology, which induces him to analyse the various nuances of love all over the world from Boston to Constantinople, while he traces the connection between each particular variation and the climate of the country and the character of the people.

With the habitual cleverness of his tongue exacerbated by the misfortune of his love affair, Stendhal became a distinguished but unpopular figure with the Parisians. Most in his element "in a salon of eight or ten persons where all the women have had lovers, where the conversation is gay and flavoured with anecdote, and when light punch is served at half-past twelve," he was merciless to the philistine and the bore, would rally with tactless truth a highly respectable lady on her liaison with the Archbishop of Paris, and would snub unwelcome declarations with artistic repartee.

Plunging vigorously into the controversy between the Classicism and the Romanticists, Stendhal published in 1825 his celebrated pamphlet *Racine and Shakespeare*, which denounced the Alexandrine as a *cache-sottise* and vindicated the live modernity of a present age against the dead orthodoxy of a past generation. This little work, rushed off in a few hours, is one of Stendhal's happiest efforts. The style

is bright with a lucid enthusiasm and sharp with a malicious logic. How crisp for instance is the truth of the following:

"Le Vielliard—'Continuons.'
Le jeune Homme—'Examinons.'
Voilà tout le dixneuvième siècle."

Shakespeare and Racine was followed by the *Life of Rossini*, whom Stendhal had known personally at Milan, and by *Armanoe* (1827), the first of that series of novels on which the literary fame of Stendhal substantially rests. This work possesses all the essential Stendhalian qualities; the vein of Byronism, the contempt for the bourgeois, the lucid style, and above all the detailed description of what takes place in the interior of the mind. The plot consists of the sentimental complications resultant on the consciousness of the hero, who is one of those souls made to feel with energy, of his natural disqualification for efficient marriage. Yet with a subtlety which is Jamesian in everything but the clearness of the style, the actual difficulty is never explicitly mentioned, though every nuance of sensitiveness is delicately delineated. And with what delicate simplicity does Stendhal narrate the suicide of Octave, who has simply married his adored cousin in order to leave her the prestige of a rich and honourable widowhood. Shortly after the marriage Octave has left his wife and set sail for Greece.

"Never had Octave been so under the spell of the most tender love as in this supreme moment. He granted to himself the luxury of telling everything to Armance except the nature of his death. A cabin boy from the top of the mast cried out 'land.' It was the soil of Greece and the mountains of the Morea which were to be perceived on the horizon. A fresh wind carried on the vessel rapidly. The name of Greece

reawakened the courage of Octave. I salute you, he said to himself, oh land of heroes. And at midnight on the third of March, as the moon was rising behind Mount Kalos, a self-prepared mixture of opium and digitalis softly delivered Octave from that life of his which had been so agitated. He was found at dawn motionless on the bridge, resting on some cordage. A smile was on his lips, and his rare beauty struck even the sailors charged with his burial."

Stendhal's next work was the well-known *Promenades en Rome*, an admirable book entirely free from the taint of the conscientious sightseer, but replete with the original observations of an acute cosmopolitan who never shrinks from following his fancy along some amiable digression. It was however in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, 1830, that Stendhal gave to the world his real masterpiece. This work, which has become since the end of the last century the revered object of the cult of the Rougistes, among whom it is a point of honour to know the whole book by heart, and which occupies an equal rank with that of the *Comédie Humaine* or *Madame Bovary*, is remarkable both by reason of the intrinsic character of the hero and the psychological technique with which the story is told.

The hero, like Stendhal himself, possesses a subjective and sensitive mind, rendered tough and virile by the savage energy of the Revolution. In fact some previous knowledge both of Stendhal's life and Stendhal's character are requisite for the full appreciation of a book which, in spite of the fact that the hero is not only a seducer but also an attempted murderer, has yet some claim to be regarded as the dignified confession of a robust faith.

Julien Sorel is the son of a carpenter in a small

provincial town. Proved guilty from his infancy of the unpardonable crime of being different from the average child, he is harshly treated by his father. The Napoleonic legend inflames his imagination, but he lives in the time of the Restoration, when it is the Church and not the Army which opens a career to the ambitious parvenu. By a stroke of fortune Julien obtains when nineteen the post of tutor to the children of the local mayor, M. de Rênal. Feeling acutely the degradation of his menial position, he violently rebels against his own sensitiveness, as he deliberately forges the natural softness of his heart into the most brutal iron. Formulating the ideals of pride and success, he determines to live up to them at whatever cost either to himself or others. When consequently the charming though ordinary Mme. de Rênal begins to manifest towards him a somewhat personal interest, he sets himself to force the pace, as a matter neither of sensuality nor even of politeness, but of sheer self-respect. What for instance are Julien's feelings during the first assignation?

"Instead of being attentive to the transports which he was bringing into existence, and to those feelings of remorse which somewhat dulled their vivacity, the idea of his duty never ceased to be present to his eyes. He was afraid of an awful remorse and of an eternal stultification if he should deviate from that ideal model which he proposed to follow." From being, however, the mere instrument of his ethical self-discipline, Mme. de Rênal becomes the sincere object of his romantic devotion. But the intrigue is discovered and Julien is packed off to a theological seminary. Though a devout freethinker, he sacrifices his beliefs to his ambition. His deviation from the mediocre pattern renders him unpopular, but his very unpopularity only serves to stiffen his

perverse obstinacy for success. After an agonising struggle he succeeds in winning the due of abilities, and goes to Paris to become secretary to the Marquis de la Môle, an influential nobleman, drawn after the model of the author's relative, Comte Daru. He gains the confidence of his employer, which he rewards by an intrigue with his daughter Mathilde (Mme. Daru). Here again it is stern devotion to principle, not natural love, which is the motive. It is in fact on purely ethical and idealistic considerations that he goes to the nocturnal rendezvous in the same spirit that a soldier goes to the field of battle or a martyr to the stake. And as Banti in that variation of Hamlet's soliloquy of "To be or not to be," which we have already considered, clinched the question by the consideration that if he did not embrace the opportunity he would regret it all his life, so did Julien exclaim: "Au fond il y a de la lâcheté à ne pas y aller, ce mot décide tout." Note also the masterly delineation of the girl herself, who, yielding originally by reason neither of her love nor her weakness, but simply through her romantic desire to emulate an illustrious ancestress, falls completely in love and manifests a courage which in spite of some affectation is none the less genuine. The Marquis de la Môle is compelled to promise to recognise Julien as his son-in-law and procures for him a commission in the army. But now just when the hero's ambitions are beginning to realise themselves, Mme. de Rênal writes, under priestly instigation, a slanderous letter to his prospective father-in-law, who withdraws his consent to the marriage. Julien in a fit of rage shoots at Mme. de Rênal, gives himself up, and dies "poetically" on the scaffold.

It is not surprising that in view of these facts critics lacking in subtlety have found the character

of Julien the wildest of impossibilities, the most monstrous of distortions. It is, however, a reasonably safe maxim to assume that those characters in novels which are thought to be too bizarre to exist are taken from actual life. In this case the actual framework of fact is drawn from the history of a young student of Besançon named Berthet, while as we have already seen his mental attitude is that of Stendhal himself. While no doubt a villain from the ethical standpoint of a modern serial, Julien is none the less, viewed more deeply, the Nietzschean knight-errant of energy and efficiency, the successful pursuer of a subjective ideal, and a perfect example of the Aristotelian virtue of ἐγκράτεια. Of all the discontented young idealists of the literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, who find themselves thrown into collision with conventional society, the Werthers, the Renés, the Don Juans, the Karl Moors, and the Vivian Greys, Julien Sorel is by far the most interesting and intellectually by far the most respectable. He has no hysterical and visionary aspirations, no mawkish Weltschmerz. A phenomenal power of analysis renders his aim direct and simple. He proposes to open the oyster of the world with the sword of his intellect. *Le Rouge et le Noir* is the tragedy of energy and ambition, the epic of the struggle for existence.

Reverting from the emotional content of the book to its more technical characteristics, it may be claimed that it was the first novel in the history of European literature to portray with successful consistency a series of characters alternately complex and simple, in a style which, whatever might be the personal sympathies and aversions of the author, subordinated all picturesque flourishes to his cardinal aim of psychological truth. For on the principle

that the external life is but the mere mechanical expression of the life carried on within the mind, Stendhal portrays his characters by describing their mental processes. This method is of course most palpable in Julien, who lives in a chronic state of soliloquy which fails, however, to blunt the edge of his drastic action, and who keeps inside his brain a register which tickets every process with the most copious annotations. But even such comparatively simple characters as M. Rênal, the purse-proud mayor of a petty provincial town; Mme. de Rênal, the conventionally adulterous wife; abbé Pirard, the Jansenist priest, all think too according to their dimmer lights and their limited intelligences, and their thoughts also are duly recorded with scientific precision.

The same year in which *Le Rouge et le Noir* was published, Stendhal wrote his other great work *La Chartreuse de Parme*, which while thought by Taine and Balzac, though not by Goethe, to have been his masterpiece, certainly lacks the original outlook and concentrated force of the earlier work. In this book, which describes all the ramifying intrigues of that Italian court life which Stendhal knew and loved so well, the rich tapestry of romance is successfully embroidered by the needle of the psychologist. The rapid succession of adventure is not an end in itself, but simply a means to the setting in motion of this numerous array of characters whose cerebral interiors are so faithfully portrayed; Fabrice del Dougo, the hero, no Ishmael of the intellect like Julien, but a *jeune premier* with a soul, who runs a wild career of military ardour, amoristic extravagance, justifiable homicide, and political persecution, only finally to fall in love with his gaoler's daughter and die in the self-chosen exile of a Trappist monastery; the Duchess of Sanseverina (a reincarnation of Stendhal's mistress, Countess

Pietragrua), his dashing and magnanimous aunt who loves him with an ardour which the reader thinks must at any rate have needed a papal dispensation; Count Mosca, the hardened minister and man of the world who is yet capable of all the devotion of a grand passion; his enemy, the grotesque and plebeian Raversi; the loyal and sonneteering coachman, Ludovici; the pretty and amiable little actress Marietta with her obstreperous lover and her avaricious duenna; Ranuce Ernest of Parma studiously living up to his majestic rôle; and most romantic if not most interesting of all, Clèlia Conti, with her pathetic clash of amoristic devotion and filial duty.

In 1830 the monetary embarrassments of Stendhal forced him to leave Paris and take up the post of consul at Trieste. The Ultramontanes, however, with a not unnatural desire to be revenged on a man whose attitude to the Church is well crystallised in the phrase that "the priests were the true enemies of all civilisation," drove him from his position, and he was transferred to Civita Vecchia where he remained till 1835, solacing his ennui by the compilation of his autobiography and thinking seriously of marriage with the rich and highly respectable daughter of his laundress. Returning to Paris, Stendhal completed *Lucien Leuwen*, that long posthumous romance of the financial, literary, and political life of the age of Louis Philippe, a work which, though lacking something of the high vital quality of *La Chartreuse* and *Le Rouge et le Noir*, does ample justice to the encyclopædic powers of the author's observation. For here too we trace the personal Stendhalian characteristics, the sympathy with the isolated intellectual, the contempt for the bourgeois and the philistine, the idealisation of an efficiency that is not always achieved. We may perhaps give

a quotation which well illustrates the friendly malice with which this detached novelist treats even his most favoured heroes:

"He talked for the sake of talking, he bandied the pro and the con, he exaggerated and altered the circumstances of every story which he told, and he told a great many and at great length. In a word he talked like a young man of parts from the provinces; and consequently his success was immense."

And how neat in the subtle simplicity of its irony is the following:

"He was received in this house with that stiffness resulting from baulked hopes of matrimony which has the knack of making itself felt in such a variety of ways and in so amiable a manner in a family composed of six young ladies who are particularly pretty."

Returning to Paris, Stendhal commenced in 1838 the last of his novels, the posthumous and unfinished *Lamiel*. Influenced, though by no means discouraged by the lack of success of his other novels, he determined to write "in a wittier style on a more intelligible subject," and with regard to each incident to ask himself the question, "Should it be described philosophically or described narratively according to the doctrine of Ariosto?" Hence Lamiel, the most fascinating feminine character in the whole of the Stendhalian literature. For Lamiel is a young woman possessed simultaneously of a brisk intellectual honesty, a lively humour, a charming *naïveté*, and a Nietzschean outlook on a tumultuous world. "Her character was based on a profound disgust for pusillanimity," and "where there was no danger there she found no pleasure." The whole book is crisp with the true comic spirit. The scene in particular in which Lamiel purchases her first lesson in the essential element of human knowledge, as a mere matter of intellectual curiosity, is a masterpiece

of racy delicacy. Yet acuteness of psychology is never sacrificed to airiness of style. Sansfin the malicious hump-backed doctor, Comte D'Aubigné Nerwinde the snob, "a serious, prudent, and melancholy paragon always preoccupied with public opinion," the plebeian parents of Lamiel, the pompous duchess, the conventional young lord, are all portrayed with a delightful malice whose satire is never too extravagant to be otherwise than convincing.

But it is Lamiel herself who dominates the book, Lamiel with that mixture of high flippancy and deep seriousness which is so essentially attractive, ever developing fresh phases in response to her repeated change of environment, yet ever retaining a fundamental consistency with her original character. It can only be regretted that Stendhal should have left unfinished what might well have been possibly the greatest, and certainly the most amusing of all his novels, and that having traced the adventures of his heroine from her plebeian origin to the aristocratic château, and from the aristocratic château to Paris, he should finally leave her floating jauntily amid all the rich welter of Parisian life with only a synopsis of those subsequent experiences which if undergone would have entitled her to rank as one of the most truly romantic characters in the whole of fiction.

In 1842, Stendhal, with his physical and intellectual faculties still unimpaired, died suddenly at the age of fifty-nine. Like his hero Julien, he was "game" to the last, and "I have struck nothingness" was his self-given substitute for the more orthodox viaticum.

In endeavouring to adjudicate finally the value of Stendhal, it is difficult not to yield to the fascination of his cock-sure prophecy of his eventual fame.

For as Stendhal the man, in his autobiographical writings, *La Vie de Henri Brûlard*, *Le Journal*, and *Souvenirs d'Egotisme*, would project his ego some years forward and as it were shake hands with himself across the gulf of time, so, one can almost say, Stendhal, the incarnation of the early nineteenth-century Zeitgeist, with his genial greeting, "Je serai compris vers 1880," shakes hands with those modern men of the world who rightly or wrongly have imagined themselves to be incarnations of the Zeitgeist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as they look back with appreciative camaraderie at this earlier manifestation of their own selves. And this no doubt is why Stendhal, viewed of course with a not unnatural Ultramontane frigidity by such critics as Sainte-Beuve or Emil Faguet, has become the spoilt darling of Nietzsche, Taine, and Bourget, and indeed all the more intellectual spirits in modern French and German literature.

The life of Stendhal no doubt may not have been as ideally satisfactory as his theories may have warranted. A man, who professed to find his chief interest in life in the erotic emotion, he played as often as not the rôle of the unhappy lover. His spasmodic fits of political and military ambition spluttered out in the self-complacent consciousness of their own intensity. He suffered throughout his life from being a dilettante with a financial competence. Yet it is no small achievement to have chased happiness so consistently and with so male an energy, to have kept unjaded to the last his intellectual gusto and the appetite of his *joie de vivre*, and to have been the first man in European literature to have put into efficient practice, without thereby in any way detracting from the clearness of

his own personal note, the important principle that the elaborate delineation of character is even more the function of the novel than adventurous action or picturesque description. And so it is that we entitle Stendhal the patentee of psychology, the inventor of introspection, and take our leave of him with his own epitaph :

Qui giace
ARRIGO BEYLE MILANESE
isse, scrisse, amo.

HEINRICH HEINE

HEINE seems, viewed superficially, the most baffling, elusive, and inconsistent of all writers, the veritable Proteus of poetry. He has so many shapes, that at the first blush it seems almost impossible to grasp finally and definitely the one genuine Heine. What is really this man who is now a gamin and now an angel, whose face seems almost simultaneously to wear the sardonic grin of a Mephistopheles and the wistful smile of a Christ, this flaunting Bohemian who has written some of the tenderest love songs in literature, this cosmopolitan who cherished the deepest feelings for his fatherland, this incarnate paradox who almost at one and the same moment is swashbuckler and martyr, French and German, Hebrew and Greek, revolutionary and aristocrat, optimist and pessimist, idealist and mocker, believer and infidel?

Yet it is even because of this surface inconsistency, this psychological many-sidedness that Heine is a great poet and the one who, mirroring in his own mind the complexity that he saw without, is typically representative of the varied phases of the early nineteenth century. Heine looks at life from every conceivable aspect: he sees the gladness of life and rejoices therein; he sees the tears of life and weeps; he sees the tragedy of life and cannot control his sobs; he sees the farce of life and finds equal difficulty in controlling his laughter. "Ah, dear reader," says Heine, "if you want to complain that the poet is torn both

ways, complain rather that the world is torn in two. The poet's heart is the core of the world, and in this present time it must of necessity be grievously rent. The great world-rift clove right through my heart, and even thereby do I know that the great gods have given me of their grace and preference and deemed me worthy of the poet's martyrdom."

The first half of the nineteenth century, in fact, in which Heine lived, is, like any transition period, disturbed, unsettled, paradoxical. The most diverse tendencies boil and bubble together in the crucible; the Revolution and the Reaction, Romanticism and Hellenism, materialism and mysticism, democracy and aristocracy, poetry and science, all ferment apace in the psychological Witches' Cauldron of the age.

Heine simply represented the illusions and disillusions of this age, or to put it with greater precision, he represented the clash and contrast between these illusions and disillusions. To arrive then at a correct appreciation of Heine it will be necessary to glance first at the main currents of the contemporary events, the political movements of the Revolution and the Reaction, and the literary movements of Romanticism and Æstheticism.

All these currents flow either directly or indirectly from the French Revolution. To the more sanguine and poetical minds of the time the Revolution had manifested itself as a species of Armageddon, a gigantic cataclysm, which, sweeping away all existing institutions with one great shock, was to leave to mankind an untrammelled existence of natural and idyllic perfection. These dreamers were destined to be rudely disappointed. The Holy Alliance temporarily suppressed the Revolution at Waterloo, and an efficient Reaction reigned both in France and in Germany. A great religious revival set in in Prussia, culminating

in the Concordat with the Pope in 1821. The Press was gagged by a rigid censorship, while the students at the universities were subjected to the most rigorous police espionage. From the point of view of the German idealists who hoped for liberty and progress, the Revolution had ended in the most dismal of fiascos.

Parallel with the Revolution ran Romanticism, which eventually merged in orthodoxy, or, to put it more accurately, in a mystical Catholicism. The cardinal characteristic of Romanticism was the revolt of the individual against the stereotyped prosaic life of the classical eighteenth century. This revolt manifested itself in the most untrammelled freedom of the ego, which either took to rioting in an elaborate self-analysis, as did Hofmann and Jean Paul Richter, or else simply abandoning ordinary life gave itself up to the cult of the bizarre, the mystic, the mediæval, and the exotic, and fell in love with the Infinite, or, to use the terminology of the school, the Blue Flower. Though, however, Heine was in his poetic youth largely influenced by the Romanticists (he was, in fact, dubbed by a Frenchman with tolerable reason an "unfrocked Romantic"), the essence of his maturer outlook on life is far from being romantic. The life-outlook of the Romanticists consisted in a vague yearning for the ideal without any reference to this earthly life; the life-outlook of Heine on the other hand was made up largely of the almost brutal contrast between the ideal and the real, between life as it was dreamed and life as it actually was.

Another current of thought which it is necessary to mention, though of course it exercised rather less influence on Heine than did Romanticism, was the æsthetic neo-Hellenic movement represented by

Winckelmann, Lessing, and to a certain extent by Goethe.

Heine, however, though a lover of the beautiful, lacked almost entirely the plastic genius and marble serenity of Hellas, and is, as will be shown later, only a Greek in the exuberance of his *joie de vivre*. To summarise then the main tendencies of the age in which Heine was born, we can see these four distinct currents—the glorious ideals of the French Revolution, the official reaction against these ideals, the cult of the bizarre and the infinite yearning of Romanticism, and the Hellenism of the æsthetic movement. Let us now turn to the poet's life, and examine the part played by environment, race, and parentage in moulding his character.

Heine was born in Düsseldorf on December 1797, and not as is currently supposed in 1799.

The Catholic Rhineland, in which Düsseldorf is situated, rebelled more than almost any other district in Germany against the despotism of the Prussian bureaucracy ; it possessed an almost southern *joie de vivre*, and only naturally exhibited a distinct inclination to the Catholicism of the Romanticists, all of which characteristics in a greater or less degree are to be found in Heine.

Further, Heine was a Jew, possessing, in consequence, an hereditary tendency to gravitate to the extreme left wing both of thought and of politics, while the inborn *Judenschmerz* in his heart was aggravated by the anti-Semitic reaction which followed the benevolent tolerance of Napoleon.

The poet's father, Samson Heine, was an easy-going, æsthetic nonentity in moderate circumstances, who does not appear to have exercised any serious influence on the child's development. This was accomplished by the mother, *née* von Geldern, a

cultured and strong-minded woman, and a Voltairean by belief, who did her best to foster and stimulate her son's youthful intelligence. The favourite authors of the young Heine were Cervantes, Sterne, and Swift. Of contemporaries, the two men who exercised any real influence were the Emperor Napoleon, and Byron, "the kingly man" and the aristocratic revolutionary. Napoleon in particular was the god of his boyish adoration. This Napoleonic enthusiasm was largely fostered by Heine's friendship with a grenadier drummer of the French army named Le Grand, while it reached its climax when he beheld with his own eyes the beatific vision of the Emperor himself riding on his beautiful white palfrey through the Hofgarten Allee at Düsseldorf, in splendid defiance of the police regulations, which forbade such riding under a penalty of five thalers.

This worship of the Emperor, moreover, resulted in the wonderful poem called "The Grenadiers," written at the age of eighteen. The swing and power of the poem have made it classic, especially the great final stanza beginning:

"Denn reitet mein Kaiser wohl über mein Grab."

Heine received his early education at a Jesuit monastery. The first event of any moment in his life, however, is his calf-love for Josepha, or Sefchen, the executioner's daughter, a weird fantastic beauty of fifteen, with large dark eyes and blood-red hair. Josepha was the inspiration of the juvenile *Dream Pictures* incorporated subsequently in the *Book of Songs*, and exhibiting a genuine power and an even more genuine promise.

In 1816 Heine was sent into the office of Solomon Heine, his millionaire uncle of Hamburg.

He seems to have been singularly destitute of the

financial genius of his race, and the business career proved from the outset a fiasco. The real key, however, to the three years spent in Hamburg is supplied not by Money, but by Love. Having served his apprenticeship in Düsseldorf with his calf-attachment to the executioner's daughter, Heine proceeded straightway to a *grande passion* for his uncle's pretty daughter Amalie. His love was not reciprocated, and in 1821 the beauteous Amalie married a wealthy landowner of Königsberg. This Amalie incident was one of the most important in Heine's life, and is largely responsible for his early cynicism. He was disillusioned with a vengeance, and could now with his own eyes inspect the flimsy material of which "Love's Young Dream" is wove. Though, however, a great personal blow, this abortive passion is also to be regarded as an invaluable æsthetic asset. The poet of necessity is bound to write of his own personal impressions and experiences; and it is obvious that the intenser are these experiences, the more vital will be his poetry. If Heine's love for Amalie was the accursed flame that seared his soul, it was also the sacred fire that kindled his inspiration, and it is to Amalie that we owe not only a great part of the *Book of Songs*, but also much which is characteristic of Heine's subsequent life-outlook.

In 1819, probably because Heine had given convincing proofs of his business inefficiency, it was decided that he should go to Bonn to study law. He neglected his studies, and it was not long before he fell foul of the authorities, owing to his anticipation in the proceedings of the Burschenschaften or student political unions.

In 1820 Heine left Bonn for Göttingen. At Göttingen his career was brief but thrilling, and he

was rusticated after a few months on account of a proposed duel with an impertinent *junker*.

Transferring his quarters to Berlin, he now spent by far the most enjoyable period of his university career. The intellectual atmosphere of Berlin was quicker and less pedantic than that of Göttingen, and he plunged into his studies with considerable energy.

In 1821 Heine published the first volume of his poems, containing the *Dream Pictures*, some miscellaneous juvenile poems, and the *Lyrisches Intermezzo*, which was inspired by the banker's, in the same way that the *Dream Pictures* had been inspired by the executioner's, daughter.

The book was an immediate success, how great may be gauged by the numerous parodies and imitations which it almost instantaneously evoked. It was at this period that he wrote the two romantic tragedies of *Ratcliff* and *Almansor*. Both failures and devoid of much merit, they served none the less useful purpose of advertising his fame.

In 1823 we see an echo of his passion for Amalie in his love for his younger cousin Therese, who seems in many respects to have been a replica of her elder sister. Therese, however, refused to be anything more than a cousin to him, and his heart was still further embittered as is shown by the poem:

"Wer zum erstenmale liebt
Sei's auch glücklos ist ein Gott
Aber wer zum zweitenmale
Glücklos liebt, er ist ein Narr
Ich, ein solcher Narr, ich liebe
Wieder ohne Gegenliebe;
Sonne, Mond und Sterne lachen
Und ich lache mit und sterbe."

In 1824 he decided to prosecute his studies for his doctorial degree with greater seriousness, and leaving behind him the distractions of the capital,

went back once more to the more staid and prosaic Göttingen.

Heine intended not merely to take a degree for the sake of ornament, but also to practise seriously as a lawyer. How serious were these intentions may be seen from the fact that he went to the length of paying in advance the heavy entrance fee which the legal profession then exacted from Jews, and became baptized "as a Protestant and a Lutheran to boot" on June 28, 1825.

Heine's conversion has frequently been criticised with superfluous harshness. Let him, however, explain his position for himself:

"At that time I myself was still a god, and none of the positive religions had more value for me than another; I could only wear their uniforms as a matter of courtesy, on the same principle that the Emperor of Russia dresses himself up as an officer of the Prussian Guard when he honours his imperial cousin with a visit to Potsdam."

After all, his apostasy brought with it its own punishment, not only in its deep-felt shame, but in the fact that he eventually threw up law for literature, and thus rendered so great a sacrifice of racial loyalty and his own self-respect consummately futile. After selling his birthright he found that he had absolutely no use for the mess of pottage which he had purchased.

In the summer of 1825, Heine, having just succeeded in passing his degree, proceeded to the little island of Norderney, off the coast of Holland, to recuperate. Living ardently the simple life and indulging to the full his passion for the sea, he now wrote not only the second part of the *Reisebilder*, entitled *Norderney*, but the far greater *Nordsee Cyklus*, which in its irregular swinging metre expresses with such marvellous efficiency the whole roar and gran-

deur of the ocean. Speaking generally, of course, Heine was too subjective to be a real nature poet. No writer, it is true, fills up so freely and with so fantastic an elegance the blank cheques of nightingales and violets, lilies and roses, stars and moonshine, yet none the less these rather served to grace his measure than as his real flame. His one genuine love was the sea. With the sea he felt a deep psychological affinity. The sea was the symbol of his own infinite restlessness, of his own divine discontent, and mirrored in the sea's ever-changing waters he beheld the incessant smiles and storms of his own soul.

"I love the sea, even as my own soul," he writes. "Often do I fancy that the sea is in truth my very soul; and as in the sea there are hidden water-plants that only swim up to the surface at the moment of their bloom and sink down again at the moment of their decay, even so do wondrous flower-pictures swim up out of the depths of my soul, spread their light and fragrance, and again vanish."

In 1826 Heine published the *Heimkehr*, the *Nordsee Cyklus*, the airy and sparkling *Harzreise*, and the first part of the *Reisebilder*.

From Norderney Heine moved to Hamburg, avowedly to practise, though it does not appear that he took his profession with much seriousness. At any rate, until 1831, when he migrated to Paris, his career is excessively erratic. At one moment he is paying a flying visit to England, "the land of roast beef and Yorkshire plum-pudding, where the machines behave like men and the men like machines"; at another he is on the staff of the *Allgemeinen Politischen Annalen* and the *Morgenblatt* of Munich; he is now in Hamburg, now in Frankfurt, and now in Italy, where his sojourn inspired the racy and brilliant *Italy* and *Baths of Lucca*, both of which works obtained the gratuitous and well-

merited state advertisement of prohibition, and achieved a most undeniable *succès de scandale.*

The departure to Paris marks an entirely new epoch in Heine's life, and offers a convenient stopping-place at which to give some account of his early poetry and prose, as exemplified in the *Book of Songs*, which was published in 1827, and the *Reisebilder*, the last part of which, the *Baths of Lucca*, was published in 1831.

Though neither the *Book of Songs* nor the *Reisebilder* is as great or as characteristic as the *Romanzero* and *Poetische Nachlese* on the one hand, or the *Salon* on the other, they are yet by far the most popular of his works and contain some of his most delightful writing. One of the first traits that strikes us in the *Book of Songs* is the Romantic tendency to bizarre and exotic themes. In the *Junge Leiden* and *Lyrisches Intermezzo* in particular we move in a ghostly atmosphere of apparitions, sea-maidens, skeletons, and midnight churchyards. Another interesting characteristic of these poems is his deep love of the East, a love which is to be probably ascribed more to the general eastward gravitation of the Romantic school than to the poet's Oriental blood. This tendency is responsible for two of the most charming poems in the book, the exquisite lyric starting:

"Auf Flügeln des Gesanges
Herzliebchen trag ich dich fort
Fort nach den Fluren des Ganges
Dort weiss ich den schönsten Ort.

Dort liegt ein rotblühender Garten
Im stillen Mondenschein;
Die Lotosblumen erwarten
Ihr trautes Schwesterlein."

And—

"Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam
Im Norden auf kahler Höh',

Ihn schläfert ; mit weisser Decke
Umhüllen ihn Eis und Schnee.
Er traumt von einer Palme,
Die fern im Morgenland
Einsam und schweigend trauert
Auf brennender Felsenwand."

This latter poem in particular illustrates admirably the vague melting, infinite yearning which Heine at first experienced as deeply as did any of the Romanticists. There are not wanting, however, and especially towards the end of the book, examples of his later manner, of that note of rebellion which he was afterwards to strike with such inimitable precision. Occasionally his wistful pessimism suddenly changes into cynicism, and in reaction from his morbid sensitiveness he derives a sardonic satisfaction from probing his own wounds as in the already quoted "Wer zum erstenmale liebt," while in the mock-heroic *Donna Clara* and in the *Frieden* we see that artistic use of the anti-climax of which he was afterwards to acquire an even greater mastery. Even in the comparatively early *Lyrisches Intermezzo* we see him constantly playing on that contrast between the Real and the Ideal, between Dream Life and Waking Life, which formed so integral a part of his subsequent life-outlook. Speaking generally, however, the *Book of Songs* exhibits the sentimental rather than the cynical side of Heine's mind. It possesses moreover those qualities which remained in Heine throughout his life, the light, airy touch, the intimate personal note, the delicate lyric sweetness, and that concision which is found in poetry with such extreme rarity.

Let us turn now to the *Reisebilder*. Its most dominant characteristics are its inimitable swing and the absolute irresponsibility of its transitions. The grave, the gay ; the lively, the severe ; the sublime,

the ridiculous; the reverent, the frivolous; the refined, the crude; the poetic, the obscene, all jostle pell-mell against each other in this most fascinating of literary kaleidoscopes. It is no mere guide-book, this record of his wanderings in the Harz, in Norderney, in England, and in Italy, but rather a description of those reflections on men and things which were suggested by his various adventures. In style the *Reisebilder* marks a new epoch in German prose, or, as has been said, showed for the first time since Lessing and Goethe that such a thing as German prose really did exist. Heine was the first to show convincingly that a Gallic grace and flexibility could be imparted into the cumbrous and heavy-footed Teutonic language.

Psychologically the most interesting part of the *Reisebilder* is the fervent Napoleonic worship which, combined with his love of liberty and revolt against reaction, largely contributed to mould his life. The general tone, moreover, of political, sexual, and religious freedom that characterises the latter part of the *Reisebilder* rendered Heine not a little obnoxious to official Germany, not only because of the intrinsic heresy of the sentiments themselves, but of the joyous rollicking insolence with which they were paraded.

It is small wonder, then, that the Paris July Revolution of 1830 made the poet feel "as if he could set the whole ocean up to the very North Pole on fire with the red-heat of enthusiasm and mad joy that worked in him," and that in the spring of 1831 he migrated finally and definitely from Germany to Paris.

This migration to Paris marks the turning-point in Heine's life. His career in Germany had throughout been erratic, unsatisfactory, and hampered by political

restrictions. In Paris he settled down, felt that now at last he was in a congenial element, and—found himself. It was at Paris that he wrote his most brilliant prose and found inspiration for his highest poetry, that he experienced his wildest joys and his intensest sufferings. The first ten years of his sojourn were probably the happiest in his life. His increased literary and journalistic earnings helped to solve the financial problem, while socially he was, as always, a pronounced success. He soon found his way into the centre of the artistic set of the capital, and was on a footing of intimacy with such writers as Lafayette, Balzac, Victor Hugo, Georges Sand, Théophile Gautier, Michelet, Dumas, Gérard de Nerval, Hector Berlioz, Ludwig Börne, Schlegel, and Humboldt. In social life Heine's most characteristic feature was wit—a wit so irrepressible as to burst forth impartially on practically all occasions, and to resemble that of the Romans of the early Empire, who preferred to lose their heads rather than their epigrams. Yet in private life he was a devoted son and brother, an ideal husband. The correspondence which he maintained up to his death with his sister Lotte and his mother show conclusively what stores of German *Gemüt* he treasured in his heart. Particularly significant is the fact that during the whole eight years in which he languished in his mattress-grave he assiduously concealed from his mother the real state of his health. Yet none the less "he could hate deeply and grimly with an energy which I have never yet met in any other man, but only because he could love with equal intensity," writes the poet's friend, Meissner. Heine disapproved on principle of swallowing an injury; when he was hit, he hit back. Not infrequently, as in his rather scandalous attack on Börne, he would *riposte*

with somewhat superfluous efficiency, though according to his own theories it must have been after all only a mistake on the safe side.

"Yes," writes Heine, "one must forgive one's enemies, but not until they have been hanged."

Heine's quarrel with Börne originally arose out of the abomination with which Börne, who was Radical to the point of fanaticism, regarded the somewhat poetic and elastic Liberalism of his fellow-Jew, and it is instructive to enter into an examination of the depth and strength of those views which supplied the real motive power which drove him from Germany to France. There can be no doubt that Heine himself took his Liberalism with perfect seriousness. "In truth I know not," he writes, "if I merit that my coffin should be decorated with a laurel wreath. However much I loved Poesy, she was ever to me only a holy toy or a consecrated means for heavenly ends. It is rather a sword that they should lay on my coffin, for I was a brave soldier in the Liberation War of Humanity." It should be observed, however, that this Liberal had the most aristocratic contempt for the uncultured δῆμος, as is shown by passages such as the following: "The horny hands of the Socialists who will unpityingly break all the marble statues which are so dear to my heart"; and, "If Democracy really triumphs, it is all up with poetry."

Yet there can be no gainsaying that Heine's political orthodoxy was perfectly unimpeachable on that anti-clericalism which has always been one of the most cardinal points of Continental Liberalism.

He is rarely tired of tilting at Catholicism, and while he regarded ascetic mediæval Catholicism as the vampire which sucked the blood and light out of the hearts of men, he dubbed the modern Catholic reactionaries in Germany "the Party of lies, the

ruffians of Despotism, the restorers of all the folly and abomination of the Past."

Yet, if his beliefs were too wide to admit of the narrowness of a consistent partisanship, his enthusiasm was deep and sincere for the joy, light, and liberty of a new era that was to sweep away all the unhealthy and plaguy humours of that blind, delirious, and anæmic mediævaldom, which, to use his own phrase, has spread over the countries like an infectious disease, till Europe was but one huge hospital. Politically, in fine, Heine is a brilliant freelance, who, too proud to wear the uniform of party, none the less fought valiantly for the army of Progress and Humanity, a forlorn outpost in the War of Freedom.[1]

Heine's polemical modernity manifested itself most efficiently in the *Deutschland*, which, together with its sequel, *The Romantic School*, was issued as a counter-blast to Madame de Staël's work of the same name. This history of the religion, literature, and philosophy of Germany is the masterpiece of Heine's extant prose. An academic philosophic treatise, of course, it neither is nor professes to be. As a description half-serious, half-flippant, however, of the main currents of modern and mediæval Germany by a writer who sees life from the bird's-eye view of the combined poet, journalist, thinker, and man of the world, it is unrivalled. It contains some of Heine's loftiest and most sublime flights, some of his most brilliant and trenchant epigrams.

Particularly happy is the comparison drawn between the furious onslaughts made by the French Revolutionists under Robespierre and the German philosophers under Kant on respectively the divine rights of kings and the divine rights of God.

[1] *Cf.* the poem "Enfant perdu," beginning "Verlorner Posten in dem Freiheits Kriege."

How delicious is the conclusion of the parallel between the two men: "Each eminently represents the ideal middle-class type—Nature had decreed that they should weigh out coffee and sugar, but Fate willed that they should weigh out other things, and in the scales of the one did she lay a King and in the scales of the other a God. . . .

"And they both gave exact weight."

As, however, has been previously pointed out, Heine's chief characteristic as a prose writer is that marvellous elasticity which can rebound from the frivolous to the sublime with the most consummate ease and celerity. Interspersed with the bright flash-light of the epigrammatic pyrotechnics lie really great passages, and pieces in particular like those on Luther and Goethe possess the clear golden ring of the grand style.

Heine's political ideals were subjected to the inevitable disillusionment. The Revolution of July, which he had fondly hoped would complete the work of the great movement of 1793, merely resulted in the anti-climax of the establishment of a bourgeois constitution under a bourgeois monarch. He tended to become generally embittered. Money matters, too, began to irritate him, and his health to give him trouble, and though he found a devoted sick-nurse in Matilde Crescenzia Mirat, a grisette whom he married in 1841, the lady with whom "he quarrelled daily for six years in that life-long duel at the termination of which only one of the combatants would be left alive," yet none the less his condition began to deteriorate. "The damp cold days and black long nights of his exile" oppressed him, and he began to yearn for the old German soil. He gratified his *Heimweh* by a flying and surreptitious visit to Germany that inspired the well-known *Germany*

or a Winter Tale, which, together with the somewhat similar *Atta Troll*, constitutes his most sustained poetic achievement. These two poems are about as characteristic as anything which he wrote. They represent admirably his wild classic Dionysiac fantasy, his sudden dips from the most extravagant Romanticism to the harsh, crude facts of reality, the marvellous swing and sweep of his Aristophanic humour.

Very typical is the following satire on the intimate relation between anthropo- and arctomorphism.

"Up above in star-pavilion,
On his golden throne of lordship,
Ruling worlds with sway majestic,
Sits a Polar bear colossal.

Stainless, snow-white shines the glamour
Of his skin, his head is wreathèd
With a diadem of diamonds,
Flashing light through all the heavens.

Harmony rests in his visage,
And the silent deeds of thought,
Just a whit he bends his sceptre,
And the spheres they ring and sing."

The above quotation shows excellently the essentially poetic quality by which Heine's wit is illumined. A satirist as keen and vivid as Voltaire, he possesses all the logical aptness of the Frenchman without his dryness. His chief characteristic, in fact, is the method by which in his imaginative flights he combines the maximum of this logical aptness with the maximum of humorous incongruity. No humorist dives for his metaphors into stranger water or brings up from the deep more bizarre and fantastic gems. A charming example of Heinean humour is the following passage from one of his prefaces: "A pious Quaker once sacrificed his whole fortune in buying up the most beautiful of the mythological pictures

of Giulio Romano in order to consign them to the flames—verily he merits thereby to go to heaven and be whipped with birches regularly every day."

One of the most cardinal traits of Heine's wit and humour is a phenomenal freedom of tone and language, a freedom that is occasionally not always in the most unimpeachable taste. Heine, in fact, is a writer who admits the public gratis to his psychological toilette, where he exposes with studied recklessness his most private thoughts. This question cuts too deep into Heine's life-outlook to be lightly passed over, and necessitates some examination. In the first place even Heine's most enthusiastic admirer will admit that a great deal of this licence is sheer gaminerie; Heine is the mischievous schoolboy of literature who thoroughly revels in being naughty, grimacing by an almost mechanical instinct, so soon as he catches a glimpse of the sacred figures of religion and sex. Like Baudelaire, he loves, almost indeed as a matter of conscientious principle, to make the hairs of the philistines stand on end. His one excuse, however, is that even when he causes the hairs of the philistines almost to spring from their roots, as indeed he does not infrequently, he conducts the operation with so light a touch, so exquisite a grace, that the offence is almost redeemed. Let him speak in his own defence in the lines from the great Jewish poem, "Jehudah Halevy":

"As in Life so too in poetry
Grace is aye Man's highest Good;
Who has grace, he never sinneth
Not in verse nor e'en in prose.

And by God's grace such a poet
Genius we do entitle,
King supreme and uncontrollèd
In the great desmesne of thought."

Not unnaturally his coarseness grew apace with the virulence of his disease, and he himself explains his cause to his friend "La Mouche": "Vois-tu c'est la faute de la mort qui arrive à grands pas, et quand je la sens ainsi tout près de moi comme à présent j'ai besoin de me cramponner la vie ne fût ce par une poutre pourrie." This final phase in fact was simply a reaction against his fate, and is not altogether without analogy to that same psychological principle which dictated much of the crude buffoonery of Swift and Carlyle by way of an heroic protest against their own helplessness.

Far more important, however, is the fact that this particular trait of Heine is profoundly symbolic of his outlook on life, especially where an obscene jest marks the climax of a genuinely poetical flight. Circumstance turned him into a cynic, who saw frequently in Liberty but the uprising of a squalid proletariate, who heard in the "sweet lies of the nightingale, the flatterer of spring," merely the "harbingers of the decay of its queenliness," and who beheld in love but a mere illusion of the senses that vanishes so soon as the beloved one utters a syllable. Held fast in the grip of the great World-paradox, Heine is forced to look at life as a glaring phantasmagoria of blacks and whites, in which the sublime and the ridiculous, the pathetic and the grotesque, the refined and the crude, dance along hand in hand till they become so confused that it is impossible for the observer to distinguish the individual partners, and he is reduced to describing, in pairs, the giddy, whirling couples that make up the fantastic medley.

This incessant antithesis makes Heine one of the most complete of modern writers.

The poet's world is composed of two hemispheres:

one is the abode of the beautiful, the grand, the tragic; the other of the ugly, the petty, the comic. Most poets confine their efforts to only a small portion of one of these hemispheres. Heine, however, is the Atlas of poetry, who supports both of the half-spheres of the world, and who, by way of proving how easily his burden sits upon him, suddenly turns juggler, and after showing his audience one side of the magic globe, will, *hey presto!* whisk the whole world round, and before they know where they are smilingly confront them with the other.

In 1848 the spinal affection from which he suffered became so acute that Heine was compelled to take to that mattress-grave where, paralytic and half-blind and racked intermittently by the most agonising spasms, he dragged out the eight most ghastly years of his life. At first the death-chamber was one of the favourite rendezvous of fashionable Paris, but as the novelty wore off, his circle of friends grew narrower and narrower, until eventually a visit from Berlioz seemed only the crowning proof of the musician's inveterate eccentricity.

Heine, however, rose manfully to the occasion, and did all that he could under the circumstances. Always a passionate lover of the paradoxical, he now began to appreciate with an intense and unprecedented relish the infinite humour of the great Life-farce, one of the most effective scenes of which was even now being enacted in the person of the poet of *joie de vivre*, who, enduring all the agonies of the damned, lay dying in La Rue d'Amsterdam to the quick music of the piano on the story underneath, while only a few feet away shone all the glow and glitter of Parisian life.

The chief occupation and solace of the dying man was the writing of his Memoirs, the great *Apologia*

pro vitâ suâ which was to square his accounts with the world, and win for him the future as his own.

Yet at times the greatness of his sufferings would soften his heart. He would find in the Bible the magic book which had power to dispel his earthly torments; the "*Heimweh* for heaven" would fall upon him, and again would he know his God. It would seem, however, that Heine's death-bed re-conversion is simply to be regarded as one of the numerous instances of the Prince of Darkness exhibiting monastic proclivities under the stress of severe physical *malaise*. For eight years Heine lay a-dying, and with the skeleton of Death assiduously serving the few bitter crumbs that yet remained of his feast of life, he was, as a simple matter of pathology, almost bound to believe once more, even if he had been the most hardened infidel in existence. Heine, however, was no cynical atheist. The current religions, it is true, he considered pretty poetry, but bad logic, yet none the less he was genuinely imbued with the ethical idea.

"I am too proud," he writes, "to be influenced by greed for the heavenly wages of virtue or by fear of hellish torments. I strive after the good because it is beautiful and attracts me irresistibly, and I abominate the bad because it is hateful and repugnant to me."

What, in fact, served Heine in the stead of a theology was his fervid enthusiasm for Progress and Humanity. His real religion was the religion of Freedom, the religion of the poor people, the new creed of which Jean Rousseau was the John the Baptist and Voltaire the chief apostle; Heine's Madonna was the red goddess of Revolution, who exacted from her worshippers innumerable hecatombs of human victims; the Man-god whom he revered

as the Saviour of Society was Napoleon, the Son of the Revolution, the drastic reorganiser of the world, who, unappreciated by the pharisees and reactionaries of his time, and finding his Golgotha on the "martyr-cliffs of St. Helena," endured for more than five years all the agonies of a moral crucifixion; while to complete our version of the Heinesque theology, his *Heilige Geist* was the Holy Spirit of the Human Intellect which he says "is seen in its greatest glory in Light and Laughter," and the Revelation which inspired him most deeply was, to use once more his own phrase, "the sacred mystic Revelation that we name poesy."

It is interesting to trace the influence of these last ghastly years on Heine's writings. His almost complete physical prostration brought with it its own compensation in the shape of a marvellous psychic exaltation, and the *Romanzero* and the *Poetische Nachlese* contain some of his greatest and most moving poems. Nowhere do we see more clearly his most characteristic excellences, his delicacy, his power of antithesis, his concision.

It is Heine's compression, in fact, which is one of the most pronounced features of his poetic style. The whole quintessence of joy and pain, of love and sorrow, is frequently distilled into one short poem. This Heinesque condensation is a variant of the same theory that can be traced in the old Impressionist school of painters which is concerned with the outline and the proper light and shading of the outline to the exclusion of minor details, and in the journalistic cult of the "story" in which the ideal aimed at is "the point, the whole point, and nothing but the point." Heine, in fact, is unique among the poets for narrating a tale with the minimum of space and the maximum of effect, for narrating it in such

a way that each line serves to heighten the level of intensity, till at length the edifice is crowned by the climax. This feature of his style is well illustrated by the end of the frequently quoted poem, "The Asra," in the *Romanzero:*

> "And the slave spake, I am called
> Mohammed, I am from Yemen,
> And my stock is from those Asras,
> *They who die whene'er they love.*"

Though, moreover, he protested to the last against his fate, his tone in the *Romanzero* and the earlier *Poetische Nachlese* is more mellow than in his earlier writings. His cry from the heart is not the cry of defiance but rather of the pathetic wistfulness of impotence. Yet before the candle of his life became extinguished it leapt up in one final flicker, the most marvellous of all. A characteristic caprice of fate made him acquainted during the last months of his life with his one true soul-affinity, the charming woman who is known under the pseudonym of Camille Selden or La Mouche.

Is it then to be wondered at that when the rich feast of a perfect love, for which he had craved Tantalus-like all his life, was offered to him almost at the very minute that his lips were being sealed by the cold kiss of death, the whole soul of the man should leap up in indignant protest, and that such poems as "Lass die heiligen Parabolen," and the even more wonderful series of stanzas with the refrain, "O schöne Welt du bist abscheulich," should exhibit the cold insolent shrug of the man convinced of the righteousness of his plea that of all the places in the universe this human earth "where the just man drags himself along beneath the blood-stained burden of his cross, while the wicked man rides in triumph on his high steed," is the most iniquitous?

Heine died at four o'clock in the morning of February 17, 1856. He was buried by his own directions in Montmartre, "in order to avoid being disturbed by the crowd and bustle of Père Lachaise."

His writings form an incessant stream of paradoxes, but his life is the greatest paradox of all. The prophet of the new religion of liberty, he was repudiated by his country, and his happiest days were spent in the land of exile; throughout his life he sought for love, to live years of the most healthy prosaic domesticity with his mistress, and to find his one true romance on his death-bed; he imagined that he was a great political force, but it is rather as a poet that he survives; as a poet his chief theme was the Joy and Light of Life, and he drew his truest inspiration from the darkest depths of his agony; even as a great writer he has been chiefly known by the comparatively inferior *Book of Songs* and *Reisebilder*, while his masterpiece, the *Memoirs*, the great highly barbed Parthian arrow shot from the grave to transfix his enemies for all eternity, lay mouldering for many years amid the dusty archives of the Vienna Library.

His message, too, the core and kernel of his philosophy, is again a paradox. To the sphinx-like riddle with which every thinker is confronted, "Is Life poetry or prose, tragedy or farce?" Heine made answer that the pathos and poetry of life were contained in the fact that life was so essentially grim and unpoetical, and that the real tragedy of the world lay in the ghastly farce of it all.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DISRAELI

THE recent centenary of the birth of Benjamin Disraeli renewed our interest in the most striking figure in the English history of the last century. Throughout his life Disraeli made it an important part of his *métier* to be interesting, and it is certainly a convincing proof both of his great natural fascination and of the adroitness with which he worked his pose, that even beyond the grave his character should still exercise our curiosity and blind us with the various facets of its brilliancy. He fairly bristles with paradoxes, this cynic, who was also a sentimentalist, this Oriental mystic, who was one of the most finished dandies in London, this shameless adventurer, with his pathetic and chivalrous devotion to his sovereign, this political Don Juan, who provided a classic example of conjugal affection. Many have essayed to solve the riddle of the "Primrose Sphinx"; but the best testimony to their almost universal failure is that nearly every biographer has produced a completely different version of his character. Mr. Hitchman, "one of the helpless, somnambulised cattle whom he led by the nose," to use Carlyle's phrase, portrays him (in *The Public Life of the late Lord Beaconsfield*) with charming *naïveté* as the "disinterested and patriotic statesman." Mr. T. P. O'Connor, on the other hand, who, when still sowing his literary wild oats, painted Disraeli even blacker than the Prince of Darkness himself, in a book unworthy of any serious biographer, simply overshoots the mark.

Froude, in his *Life*, comes nearer to the truth, but is hampered by being forced to compress the history of a crowded life and the psychology of a complex character into a narrow and inadequate compass. Both Froude, however, and Mr. Sichel, who has given us an interesting volume on Disraeli's personality, lay too much stress on his imaginative and idealistic features.

The reason for this inability to comprehend a character, in many respects singularly typical of his age, lies not so much in the alleged inadequacy of the materials as in the incapacity of most English writers for handling general ideas. The English mind is too concrete for social psychology; it delights in the almost mechanical work of classifying animals, but fails to produce any classification of characters worth the name. The Disraeli problem is admittedly difficult; the secrecy which until recently kept us from all knowledge of the greater portion of his papers and correspondence is undoubtedly a handicap, but the difficulty is by no means insuperable, nor the material so scanty as is usually supposed. Let us take Disraeli in relation to his age, his environment, his ancestry, then what would otherwise have struck us as strange, not to say impossible, stands out clear and inevitable. Another valuable source of information is to be found in his novels, though it is always difficult to discriminate between what is and what is not autobiographical in these works.

A vigorous and imaginative mind, when writing about its own history, will naturally not stint itself in its licences; it will abandon itself to all kinds of hypotheses; it will take a certain phase of itself, frame circumstances to suit its development, and proceed on the fictitious assumption; it will indulge

freely both in caricature and idealisation. In *Vivian Grey*, for instance, Disraeli has slightly exaggerated the more cynical side of his nature; *Sidonia*, on the other hand, is an idealised version of Disraeli; it is Disraeli raised to a higher power; it is what he would have liked to have been, but was not, any more than the actual Byron was as brave, as romantic, and as fascinating as the ideal Byron who is portrayed in *Conrad*, *Childe Harold*, and *Don Juan*.

Yet, none the less, *Sidonia*, *Fakredeen*, *Vivian Grey*, and *Contarini Fleming* possess a strong family likeness, and strike a genuine autobiographical note. With regard to the two latter, Mr. Sichel, in his study of Disraeli, is unwarranted in his attempted depreciation of their evidence, on the theory that they represent merely a distorted and transient phase of Disraeli's development, to be ascribed to ill-health and immaturity. On the contrary, the contortions of great men in adolescence are peculiarly instructive. It is then that the very elements of the future man are fermenting in the crucible; and is not growth more significant than maturity? It is not a paradox, but a fundamental truth, to say that a man is never more himself than when he is not himself; it is in periods of violent upheaval that the conventional superstructure is destroyed and the innermost foundations of character are laid bare. It is far easier to tone down than to touch up, and the unrestrained sincerity of these early novels, written under the impetus of intense emotion, throws far more light on Disraeli's real character than a book like *Endymion*, the official pronouncement of his maturer years. A prudent use, then, of the novels, and an examination of his relations to his age, environment, and ancestry should enable us to construct a psychol-

ogy of Disraeli that should be at once convincing and consistent, and adequate to shed light on many of the obscure points of his character.

The *Sturm und Drang* age of the Revolution in which Disraeli was born marked the passing of Europe from childhood to manhood, from mediævalism to modernity. Like all transition periods, it was peculiarly complex; the tendencies being so varied, and were so frequently accompanied by the reactions against themselves, that it requires considerable care to disentangle the principal threads.

It was an age of progress where reaction was frequently to be seen at work; it was an age significant for a violent outburst of scientific materialism, and the consequently inevitable mysticism of a religious revival. It was an age at once scientific and romantic, individual and cosmopolitan. It was an age where circumstances produced strange mixtures, so that in England we are brought face to face with the paradox that Gladstone, the founder of democratic idealism, obtained his seat under the old system of close boroughs, while Disraeli, the most brilliant example of the new democratic theory of *la carrière ouverte aux talentes*, found his way to power as the head of the aristocratic and conservative party. The predominant note, however, was one of democratic individualism. With the French Revolution the yoke of responsibility, political and religious, was violently thrown off; new and wide fields had been opened out to commerce by the extended communications and the new mechanical inventions. A quickened life broke in upon the lethargy of the previous century. The struggle for existence entered on a sharper and intenser phase. Ambitious men vehemently dashed themselves against the social barrier, which day by day became more easy to

climb. In every department it was the age of the clever and ambitious parvenu. In war and in politics Napoleon, in poetry Burns, in fiction Balzac, give convincing testimony to the power of the new régime. It was the age of the French Revolution and of the Holy Alliance, of Condillac and of Châteaubriand, of Laplace and of Shelley, of Godwin and of Tom Paine.

But equality is a medal with two faces: on the one side is written, "I am as good as, if not better than, everyone else"; on the other, "Everyone else is as good as, if not better than, myself." The first was the motto of the rampant individualism and vigorous national policy of Disraeli, the latter of the hesitating Christian spirit and sentimental cosmopolitanism of Gladstone. Gladstone, indeed, is such an excellent foil to Disraeli that we may well be permitted the following quotations, where the rift in Gladstone's lute, between the churchman and the politician, stands in pointed contrast to the unity of purpose that from his earliest years actuated his rival. Gladstone, torn between his missionary impulse and yearning for apostolic destination on the one hand, and healthy ambition on the other, writes to his father: "I am willing to persuade myself that in spite of other longings, which I often feel, my heart is prepared to yield other hopes and other desires for this: of being permitted to be the humblest of those who may be commissioned to set before the eyes of man the magnanimity and glory of Christian truth. Politics are fascinating to me, perhaps too fascinating. My temper is so excitable that I should fear giving up my mind to other subjects, which have ever proved sufficiently alluring to me, and which I fear would make my life a series of unsatisfied longings and expectations." Disraeli is less undecided,

as is clear from the following quotation from *Contarini Fleming*: "I should have killed myself if I had not been supported by my ambition, which now each day became more quickening, so that the desire of distinction and of astounding action raged in my soul, and when I realised that so many years must elapse before I could realise my ideal, I gnashed my teeth in silent rage and cursed my existence." Disraeli will give up anything rather than his chance of being a great man. At a time when most clever young men of his age were thinking of a scholarship he had finally decided to go in for a premiership. He has planned his campaign, he will fool the world to the top of its bent. When yet a boy Disraeli says, as Vivian Grey: "We must mix with the herd, we must sympathise with the sorrow that we do not feel and share the merriment of fools. To rule men we must be men, to prove that we are strong we must be weak. Our wisdom must be concealed under folly, our constancy under caprice."

None the less, Disraeli had too vivid an imagination, too keen a sense of the picturesque, not to be affected to a certain extent by the current Romanticism. We see this in the Eastern novels of *Tancred* and *Alroy*, also in *Contarini Fleming*, the English Wilhelm Meister, which exhibits the weaker and more morbid side of the author's character, and is a useful supplement to Vivian Grey. But it is the latter, however, who represents most accurately the ideals and aspirations of the young Disraeli, and, taken generally, is a broad adumbration of his subsequent career. But the Disraeli of Vivian Grey was not so unique as is usually considered, and an analogy between him and the celebrated Frenchman, who wrote a novel about the same period, and one, moreover, singularly typical of his age, proves

instructive. Benjamin Disraeli and Henri Beyle were in all superficial details so absolutely different that one might well hesitate before making the comparison, yet they were radically similar in many of their larger outlines, and in particular their characters, as revealed in the heroes of two novels, *Vivian Grey* and *Le Rouge et le Noir*, show an extraordinary resemblance. Both Julien Sorel and Vivian Grey are impelled by a violent and overwhelming ambition; both, originally excluded by their status from participation in the great prizes of the world, set out undaunted to conquer, the one as a priest, the other as a politician. Cynical, with that extreme and savage species of cynicism which is the reaction from intense sensitiveness, they both wage war on society in their passion for success, while the nobler and more generous instincts with which nature had endowed them perish in the struggle.

But this Time-Spirit of individualism was no mere cold-blooded philosophy of egoism. It was, after all, an age of genuine poetry, of fresh ideals. The halo of romance played around the most abandoned sinners. Individualism found, in addition, an æsthetic sanction, as was seen in the prodigious vogue of Byron, where the picturesque pose of the one man pitted against society appealed strongly to the popular imagination. How deeply Disraeli was imbued with Byronism is evidenced not only by the whole tone and manner of his early life, but by his resuscitation of the Byronic legend in *Venetia*.

This spirit of combined idealism and intense practical energy is met with again in Disraeli's race and ancestry. The Jewish race is a compound of materialism and idealism. The Jew is the dreamer in action, combining fluid imagination with adamantine purpose. These two phases of the Jewish

character are seen excellently in Disraeli's father and paternal grandfather. The latter, an Italian Jew, came over to England about the middle of the eighteenth century, and quickly made a fortune by dint of his shrewd business talent and fixity. His son Isaac was gifted with an unfortunate superfluity of the poetic temperament. His youth was erratic and unhappy, but when close on thirty he found a secure refuge in the quiet waters of literature. To his Semitic blood is also to be traced Disraeli's prodigious tenacity of purpose. He came of a stiff-necked people, so that opposition stimulated him, and his early failures served but to render sweeter his eventual success. He had, too, the calculating foresight of the Jew, and could pierce the future, if not with prophetic vision, at any rate, with marvellous intuition. His Oriental strain of mysticism served him in good stead. He never forgot that he was a scion of the Chosen People, and came of a race which had never sullied its purity of lineage by changing its blood. Was he not the chosen man of the chosen race? Could he not read his future, if not in the stars, "which are the brain of heaven," yet in his own brilliant and meteoric brain? He had a full measure of the pride of race, and plumed himself to the last on what he may well have called "the Oriental ichor in his veins." If his enemies dubbed him a parvenu he would fling the wretched taunt back in their faces, bidding them realise that they came from a parvenu and hybrid race, while he himself was sprung from the purest blood in Europe. How keen was this genealogical Judaism we can see from the classic letter to O'Connell, where he wrote that "the hereditary bondsman had forgotten the clank of his fetters," and from his masterpiece of character-drawing, Sidonia, who, with

wealth, intellect, and power at his command, yet found his chief "source of interest in his descent and in the fortunes of his race." Disraeli's Judaism, however, did not extend to the religious tenets of the creed. Few, no doubt, are the instances of a converted Jew proving a genuine Christian, but Disraeli had too much of the mystic in him to be an atheist, and if we take into account the elasticity of his imagination, there is little reason to doubt that he was at any rate reasonably sincere in his belief that Christianity was merely completed Judaism, Calvary but the logical corollary of Sinai; he would also, no doubt, find a malicious joy in reminding those who taunted him with his origin, that "one half of Christendom worships a Jew and the other half a Jewess." Anyway, the Christian religion played nothing approaching an integral part in his life; while an amiable acquiescence in its dogmas was, at the best, as it has been with so many, but an intellectual habit. His Jewish origin helped him, moreover, in that he approached the problems of politics with a mind free from conventional British prejudices. He was never a thorough Englishman, and was proud of the fact, instead of thanking God "that he was born an Englishman," as do many of his race, who betray in their every word and action their Jewish nationality. His admirable expert knowledge of the English character was throughout professional, not sympathetic.

When we turn to Disraeli's early environment, we find that it was one calculated to foster both ambition and a literary imagination. He breathed from his earliest days the atmosphere of books, and almost from the cradle imbibed avidly the many volumes of Voltaire. Nothing is so stimulating to the youthful mind as the unchecked run of a library, with its delightful excursions into the unexplored country of

literature. His natural sensitiveness was hardened by his experiences at school, where his nationality and cleverness rendered him unpopular. The reaction intensified his already precocious ambition, and gave him that consciousness of semi-isolation which formed one of the chief parts of his strength. His ambition was further heightened by the smart literary set which he met constantly at his father's house, and his early glimpses of the great world. Disraeli is palpably exaggerating when he says, *apropos* of Vivian Grey, that "he was a tender plant in a moral hothouse," but the following passage is significant:

> "He became habituated to the idea that everything could be achieved by dexterity, that there was no test of conduct except success; to be ready to advance any opinion, to possess none; to look upon every man as a tool, and never to do anything which had not a definite though circuitous purpose."

It is this trait of doing things with an object which supplied the true clue to Disraeli as a man of letters. We admit, of course, the *verve* and brilliancy of the novels, their claim to rank as classic, but it is impossible to arrive at a correct appreciation of them unless they be taken in the closest conjunction with their author's political career. *Vivian Grey*, for instance, no doubt afforded an excellent outlet for the fermenting passion of Disraeli's youth; it was itself one of the best society novels ever written, but it was something more. Before that time the future Premier had been hiding his light. How could he obtain a free field for the exercise of his gifts? His father's Bohemian clique scarcely answered his purpose. How could he burst open the doors of society? The bombshell was supplied by *Vivian Grey*. It was a case of self-advertisement raised to the level of a fine art, and Disraeli introduced himself to the public with a bow of most elaborate flourishes. *Contarini Fleming*

strikes a slightly different note, exhibiting the more poetic side of its author's character ; but we must not forget that at the time when it was published Disraeli's long absence in the East had temporarily obscured his fame in London, and that it was the success of *Contarini Fleming* which secured for him once more the *entrée* into society. Similarly, *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and *Tancred* were, in the main, but the gospels in which, in the rôle of a political saviour, he propagated the new creed of Young England. *Lothair* and *Endymion* were partly written to replenish his empty exchequer. The protagonists, moreover, in all his chief novels were fashioned in the image of himself, and even Lord Cadurcis in *Venetia*, who is theoretically Byron, is portrayed with the physical features of the author, so as to ensure a vivid impression on the public mind of his own personality. Not that Disraeli did not experience a genuine joy in the wielding of the pen. He could soar high in his flights of mysticism and romance ; could describe the picturesque and the beautiful in passages of inspired rhetoric, though it was in the dash and brilliancy of his satire which at its best equalled that of Heine, or Voltaire, or Byron, that he was most himself. His style is redolent of his race. It possesses the genuine Oriental glamour, the Oriental love of gorgeous and grandiose magnificence, the Oriental lack of symmetry and proportion. His prodigious genius for sarcasm was also Semitic, if we are to believe Mr. Bryce, who considers that gift a peculiar property of the race, instancing, as examples, Lucian and Heine, the greatest satirists of ancient and modern times.

This same combination of temperament and policy which explains Disraeli, the man of letters, explains Disraeli, the dandy. Living as he did in an age which revolted, under the leadership of Count D'Orsay,

against the chaste and classic traditions of Brummel, and which offered in the elaborate picturesqueness of its dress an excellent medium for the expression of personality, is it to be wondered at that so ambitious a nature as Disraeli's should, apart from other reasons, enter gaily into the sartorial arena? These early years remind us of Alcibiades, who, in his youth, his genius, his precocious political ambitions, his aristocratic lineage and superb insolence, his extravagance and irresponsibility, offers a fairly close analogy. Disraeli, however, was an Alcibiades with ballast, and his most erratic phases were governed by a consistent purpose. He had, it is true, the regular Hebrew love for the picturesque, the racial craving for flamboyant display; but the unique characteristic of the man was the ingenious method by which he exploited even his weaknesses to advance his purpose. Realising that nothing was more fatal to his career than the indifference of the public, that to be hated was better than to be ignored, and that notoriety was a passable substitute for fame, he was determined to bulk largely in the public eye. Living, fortunately, in an age when dandyism, if not an art, was at any rate a career, and when "wild, melancholy men" were still the rage among the ladies, he manipulated the dandy and Byronic pose with phenomenal success. But his social career was not all pose. Though political ambition was to him always the main point of existence, he was far too healthy to lose sight of the small change of life. He had, moreover, a genuine love of society. His remark *apropos* of Gladstone, "What can we do with a leader who is not even in society?" was sincere in spite of being an epigram, and the hosts of great ladies who crowd his novels attest conclusively to his social fastidiousness. But the most convincing proof of this lighter side of his

nature is to be found in his correspondence with his sister. Those letters, dashed off hurriedly to his "dearest Sa," written with that complete lack of ceremony which is the sign of a perfect intimacy, show with what zest he frequented balls and water-parties, dinners and *soirées*. Yet his ambition is never far in the background. He goes to the House of Commons, hears the big man speak, and then writes to his sister, "But between ourselves I could floor them all." His genius for conversation is historic, and we are not surprised that he considered that the one unforgivable sin was to be a bore. He had not, it is true, Gladstone's habit of unburdening himself freely to the most casual of acquaintances. How many, indeed, were there of his intimates who had penetrated into the secret places of his heart? But over-much sincerity is a hindrance to the art of conversation; and many of his most brilliant paradoxes were thrown off as an evasive retort to an impertinent question. When, however, we come to Disraeli's social and private life, the most interesting question that presents itself is that of his relation to his wife. Even though he had discoursed in *Contarini Fleming* of the grand passion with all the high-flown sentimentalism of the age, it was obviously impossible for him, considering the disparity of their ages, to be seriously in love with Mrs. Disraeli; and it must have seemed that he had been forced to exchange the poetry of the mistress for the prose of the wife. Had he not, about ten years before his marriage, written to his sister, "How would you like Lady B—— for a sister-in-law? Clever, £25,000, and domestic. As for love, all my friends who have married for love either beat their wives or live apart from them. This is literally true. I may commit many follies, but never that of marrying for love,

which, I am convinced, cannot but be a guarantee of infelicity." Yet this union, based originally on mere policy and camaraderie, was eventually crowned with the most faithful of loves. It was his wife's absorbing interest in his career that supplied the link. He has himself written that the most exquisite moment in a man's life was when he surprised his lady-love reading the manuscript of his first speech, and the sympathy of Mrs. Disraeli in his successes may well have given them a yet further charm. The situation is well expressed in the remark of Mrs. Disraeli's: "You know you married me for money, and I know that if you had to do it again you would do it for love."

In fact the warm and constant affection Disraeli lavished on his wife during her lifetime, and the poignant grief that he evinced at her death, furnish a more than sufficient refutation to those who persist in regarding him as a mere cynical fortune-hunter. Disraeli, like Browning, had

> "Two soul sides, one to face the world with,
> One to show a woman when he loves her."

In the other departments of private life he was likewise exemplary. His hardness was limited to politics; he was the most dutiful of sons, the most affectionate of brothers, the most faithful of friends. His debts, for the most part, were incurred by backing the bills of other men. His touching and romantic friendship for Mrs. Brydges Williams, the eccentric old Cornish lady who gave him pecuniary assistance at a critical period of his career, is well known. The story, again, of the Premier and his wife dancing a Highland jig in their night apparel on hearing of the success of an old friend, shows how little the bitter struggles of politics had hardened his heart. Particularly touching, also, is the mutual

affection between him and the Queen, that sweetened his last years. She was, as we read in a letter of Disraeli's to the Marchioness of Ely, "the best friend he had in the world."

But Disraeli, though he fulfilled himself in many ways, was first of all a politician, and it is Disraeli the politician rather than Disraeli the man of letters, the dandy, or the human being, that principally provokes our interest. What were his real views on politics? How far can we distinguish between the official edition of himself which he displayed for public inspection and the original that he alone could read? Given his policy, how far was it justifiable, how far rational? The view of his most devoted, but yet in reality, quite unappreciative, admirers, that throughout a political career of over half a century he remained consistently and absolutely faithful to his original ideals, and that he introduced into politics an integrity and disinterestedness that Parliament had rarely witnessed, is even more absurd than the opinion of his blind and malignant enemies that he was a mere charlatan who juggled with parties and the people without possessing a single genuine political faith of his own. Disraeli, as was inevitable in a man of so detached and unprejudiced a nature, simply took the then party system at its true worth, and, of course, realised from the outset that before he could do anything worth doing he must first obtain that power which alone could give him the opportunity of doing it. His attack on Peel was, *primâ facie*, an occasion that it would have been the depth of folly to have missed, and Mr. Birrell's statement that Disraeli "ate his peck of dirt," and his comparison of him to Casanova, is mere petulance. For these preliminary stages of the higher politics Disraeli was admirably fitted, and the following autobiographic

passages from *Tancred* show how congenial were his Herculean labours: "To be the centre of a maze of manœuvres was his empyrean, and while he recognised in them the best means of success he found in their exercise a means of constant delight"; and again, "'Intrigue,' cried the young prince, using, as was his custom, a superfluity of expression both of voice and hand and eyes, 'intrigue, it is life, it is the only thing. If you wish to produce a result you must make a combination, and you call combination intrigue.'" Disraeli viewed party politics from the dispassionate standpoint of a chess-player, "playing off the proud peers like pawns," skilfully manœuvring his knights and bishops beneath the shadow of the old mediæval castles, though it was "in his masterly manipulation of his queen" that he really surpassed himself. What a contrast to Gladstone's youthful frame of mind, who entered politics because he felt a strong moral duty to defend that Church which he was afterwards partly to disestablish against the insidious attacks of philosophic Radicalism. But Disraeli's point of view was, after all, merely that which was obvious and rational. It is well known that in Disraeli's day the whole efficiency of the party system as a means of carrying on the government was based on that sagacious inconsistency, so characteristic of this country, which, cheerfully accommodating the most untractable of facts to the most docile of theories, drew between the two parties no clear dividing line either of principle or of class. Those genuine lines of cleavage both of policy and interest that now tend to become more and more clearly marked did not then exist. The only vital political distinction then existing in England was that between the Ins and the Outs. Whigs and Tories were, in their origin, merely the names for the two

rival organisations for the pursuit of political power into which the oligarchy of the time had divided itself, and the party catch-words then indicated as much essential difference as the badges by which the two sides of a "scratch" game symbolise a fictitious distinction.

Particularly interesting is the following quotation from a letter of Gladstone, written comparatively early in his career, which shows convincingly that the subsequent democratic idealist fully realised the intrinsic farce of the then party system: "Each of them, the Whig and the Tory Party, comprises within itself far greater divergencies than can be noticed as dividing the more moderate portion of the one from the more moderate portion of the other. The great English parties differ no more in their general outlines than by a somewhat different distribution of the same elements in each." It is impossible for the opportunist position to be more cogently stated. It is, indeed, a strange paradox that political integrity should be traditionally associated with the name of Gladstone, who accomplished more than any other of our statesmen in changing statesmanship into demagogy. His pronouncedly religious temperament, however, led to extraordinary results, and his psychological condition was best expressed in the well-known epigram that "he followed his conscience in the same manner that the driver of a gig follows the horse." It was not that he was deliberately insincere. He could deceive himself as well as others with his ingenious sophisms. His sincerity was merely so elastic, his enthusiasm so adaptable, that he found it easy to be sincere and enthusiastic, *inter alia*, about those things which coincided with his interests.

Carlyle hits the mark in dubbing Gladstone a

deeper and unconscious juggler as contrasted with Disraeli, the clever, conscious juggler. The latter, at any rate, played the game straight with himself. He did not, like his rival, have recourse to supernatural inspiration for every argument that dropped from his specious lips, or degrade his deity into a veritable *deus ex machinâ*, whose function it was to sanction the most elementary dictates of Parliamentary tactics.

Yet, though he exhibited a prudent elasticity in his handling of the minor details of party politics, in the main outlines of his policy he remained consistent and true to himself throughout his career. The romantic strain in his temperament rendered him congenitally opposed to the cut and dried utilitarianism of the Whigs. The renovated Toryism of New England, for which he was largely responsible, though to a great extent merely a move in the game, is deeply stamped with the impress of his own nature. That his bias was naturally aristocratic no one can doubt who has read the passage in *The Revolutionary Epicke* on Equality, or has appreciated the tone of personal superiority and contempt for the mediocre that pervades all his writings. His Conservatism, however, was not the orthodox Conservatism of the Eldon school, "the barren mule of politics which engenders nothing," to use his own phrase, but a more picturesque and practical policy. He poured successfully the new wine of Democracy into the old bottles of Toryism, and thus, while no doubt indulging the more romantic side of his nature, placed his party on a more modern and workable basis. Disraeli's policy, in fact, was always one of sane and rational opportunism. In the same way that Gambetta, the exponent of French Opportunism, opposed "a policy of results to the policy of

chimeras" of the reactionaries, Disraeli opposed to Gladstone's dangerous and visionary ideals a policy that was at once feasible and salutary. Disraeli invariably treated England as a definite country with a definite personality of its own, requiring individual attention and delicate handling, while Gladstone regarded her as a mere *tabula rasa* on which the latest new-fangled doctrines could be easily imprinted. Precisely the same spirit induced Gladstone to treat the Queen as a department of State and Disraeli to treat her as a woman. In home politics he has grasped well that transition from feudal to federal principles which was the keynote of the last century politics. His detractors object that no great measures stand identified with his name; but here the fates were against him. It was a cruel paradox that when at last he obtained an untrammelled power he was too old and jaded to initiate any new creative measure in domestic affairs. I quote Mrs. Disraeli: "You don't know my Dizzy; what great plans he has long matured for the good and greatness of England. But they have made him wait and drudge so long, and now time is against him." In his foreign policy, however, he displayed his characteristic combination of practical and imaginative strength. In the same spirit in which he himself had obtained the foremost place in England, he desired that England should acquire the foremost rank among the nations; while, as is shown by his Imperial policy, he infused something of his own picturesqueness into the policy of the most prosaic Power in Europe. His Indian policy, in particular, proves with what practical imagination he had divined how much lay in a name, and that to the feudatory princes it meant all the difference whether they paid their allegiance to the Queen of England or to the Empress of India.

Disraeli's master-passion was ambition. But he was no monomaniac like Napoleon. In the same way that Sidonia, the complete and perfect man, according to Disraeli, played with a master-hand on the whole gamut of life, so did Disraeli, though in a lesser scale, live largely and fully. He lived in the solitudes of the Arabian deserts and in the crowded drawing-rooms of St. James's; in the halls of Westminster and the shady quietude of Bradenham; in the privacy of his own study, and in the historic chambers of Downing Street. To few men has it been given to express themselves in so many different ways. What matter if his feats of statesmanship were restricted by the limitations of the Parliamentary system and the handicap of his own failing health? To such a nature the joy of life lay rather in the winning than in the using of the prize. It is the romance and character of the man that perpetuate his memory rather than his political achievements. He lives as a great career. When yet a boy he had mapped out his future, and he realised his ambition in every detail. By sheer force of intellect and determination he lifted himself from the Ghetto to the highest position in England. As he himself said, in one of Mrs. Craigie's novels: "Many men have talent; few have genius; fewer still have character."

THE GENEALOGY OF MORALS

I

The Genealogy of Morals: a Polemic! Nietzsche was well advised to append the word "polemic" to his title, for it supplies the key to his whole position. To some extent, no doubt, the "Genealogy" may be the expression in more philosophic language of those ideas, which find in Zarathustra their poetic and almost biblical formulation. Yet philosopher though he may be, Nietzsche is no abstract thinker sitting down stolidly on some icy height to solve the riddle of the universe, whatever it may be, by the rigid rules of abstract logic, so that he may placidly present the solution to such members of the public as happen to be interested in metaphysics. On the contrary his mind, and even more truly his temperament, are made up from the outset. Certain ideas grip him so tensely, and for him, at any rate, constitute so fiery and omnipresent a reality, as to be from his standpoint things transcending the mere cavillings of logicians and scientists.

"You ask me why," says Zarathustra, "but I say unto you I am not one of those whom one may ask their why."

The same idea is more technically expressed in the preface to the Genealogy—"that new immoral, or at least, 'amoral' *à priori*, and that 'categorical imperative,' which was its voice (but, oh! how hostile to the Kantian article, and how pregnant with problems), to which since then I have given

more and more obedience (and, indeed, what is more than obedience)." For, startling though it may seem to the orthodox, albeit acceptable enough to the acolytes of the new faith, the fact stands out irresistibly, that all the later writings of Nietzsche are saturated through and through with the religious spirit.

For Nietzsche was inspired with as supreme a consciousness of the infallibility and paramount necessity of his message, as rigid a belief in exclusive salvation through his own teachings, as has overwhelmed the brain of any prophet or Messiah known to human history. "I have given mankind the deepest book it possesses," writes Nietzsche to Brandes, and means it quite deliberately and quite literally. The content, indeed, of the religion of this converse Christ may be diametrically opposed to that of the original, but the machinery is the same. With the same exalted spirit in which Jesus preached the kingdom of heaven, so did Nietzsche preach the kingdom of this earth, while it may be noted incidentally that both kingdoms were the perquisites of a select few; and as the spurned god of Israel taught self-abasement to the weak with an intensity that, rightly or wrongly, seems a little extravagant to our modern taste, so does Nietzsche, and with every whit as honest a fanaticism, thunder forth to the strong the sublime dogma of self-expression and self-glorification. Turn, in fact, the doctrines of Christianity upside down, but leave constant the missionary enthusiasm of its founder, his chronic fits of extreme depression and extreme exaltation, and you have the quintessence of Nietzsche.

As, however, it is the boast of all religions that they are beyond the realms of exact logic and empirical science, it would be as unfair to look in our

prophet's polemic for the mathematical accuracy of a Euclidian proposition, as it would be to search for such accuracy amid the many grandiose and tragic thoughts that loom over the invectives of Isaiah, Jesus, and Jeremiah.

Not, indeed, but what there are many new, swift, and illuminating truths in our philosopher's gospel, just as there were in the pronouncements of his aforesaid Hebrew brethren. But the essence, the *raison d'être* of the whole book is purely polemical. Nietzsche is out to kill, and so long as his weapons effectually subserve that object, he is, and quite logically, indifferent to aught else.

Before, however, we analyse in detail the philosophy of this book, it is advisable to adjust our sights to those particular targets on which Nietzsche trained his gigantic and murderous artillery. We shall also have a better prospect of getting really into touch with "the very inner pulse of the machine," the real core of this philosophy, if we take a necessarily short, but it is to be hoped none the less vivid, glance at those reasons which induced Nietzsche to envisage the objects of his attack with so tense and implacable a hatred.

Now Nietzsche found his intellectual jumping-off ground in that hybrid of Christianity and Buddhism stuck on a pedestal of sex, which constituted the philosophy of Schopenhauer and the essence of the fashionable pessimism of mid-century Germany. To endeavour to condense one of the most brilliant and elaborate systems of the last century into a few words is at best a delicate and hazardous task, yet perhaps we may adumbrate tentatively the radical elements which spurred Nietzsche to so sanguinary a revolt.

Life according to Schopenhauer was a sorry failure, a thing not worth living on its merits, but

kept going by the driving impetus of a blind life-force and knit with a mutual pity. Life then being intrinsically evil, the remedy for the evil was to live as little as possible—"Draw your desire back from the world so that there may be an end of that phenomenal life which is nothing but grief." Apart from general asceticism, there were two specific anodynes prescribed by Schopenhauer for the disease called life—art which transcended life, and lifted the spectator or listener on to another plane, and philosophy which, as it were, blunted the sting of life by the contemplation of the essentially unreal nature of the phenomenal universe. But the greatest good was Nirvana, a kind of Pantheistic Absolute of negativity, into which one eventually merged, to enjoy the supreme paradox of a peaceful self-consciousness of one's own nothingness.

It is easy for us to sneer, nowadays, at this bilious and suicidal system, and to explain the whole theory of the Will to Live by the keen and chronic tyranny which the sexual instinct exercised over the philosopher himself; the fact remained, Schopenhauer was the dominant influence of the day—how dominant, can be seen from the fact that the whole of later Wagnerian music is merely a translation of his philosophy into the language of sound. It is easy to see the extent to which Schopenhauer and Wagner were saturated with the whole spirit of primitive and mediæval Christianity. Human life, forsooth, is essentially bad and essentially unreal; salvation only lies in the mortification and annihilation of the self. Apart, however, from philosophical and theological technicalities, the profound psychological import of this nihilistic pessimism and neo-Christian romanticism is patent. Man looks at man's life on earth, and gives it up as a bad job, or at best makes some

fantastic effort to create a new world to redress the balance of the old. "They wanted to run away from their misery, and the stars were too far away. Then they sighed, Oh, that there were heavenly ways, forsooth, to slink into another Being and Happiness."

It has, in fact, been well put that, as the motto of Goethe was "*Memento vivere*," so was the motto of Schopenhauer, "*Memento mori*."

Now, Nietzsche voiced the revolt of those temperaments whose ears were attuned rather to "*Memento vivere*" than "*Memento mori*." We must remember, moreover, that that Christian romanticism which finds its best metaphysical formulation in Schopenhauer was in itself but a reaction from the real spirit of the century, that ebullience and exuberance of the human ego of which Stendhal is perhaps the most typical manifestation. It might well indeed be instructive to trace the intellectual descent of Nietzsche from Stendhal, and, applying again the sociological method, to speculate as to how far he derived some of the impetus for his philosophy of egoism from the aggressive wars of Prussia, as exemplified in the Sadowa campaign and the Franco-German war. It is time, however, that we came to the temperament of the philosopher himself. It is indeed a platitude, that as man makes his gods in his own image, so does the philosopher create his systems. What is Aristotle's ideal of the βίος θεωρήτικος, and his conception of the self-contemplative god but the erection into a universal norm of the thinker's natural philosophic idiosyncrasy? What is the elaborate "I and Me" of the cosmology of Fichte but the attribution to the universe of the personal idiosyncrasies of Fichte, the self-conscious Doppelgänger? And how Schopenhauer promoted sex into the devil, whose heat

animates this earthly hell, we have already seen. What, then, was the impetus which impelled Nietzsche to batter down the walls of the contemporary moral and philosophic universe? The theory of an innate *joie de vivre*, a system highly if not over-charged with vitality, supplies but half the answer. The real explanation lies in the stiffening of this natural exuberance beneath the tension of a grim incessant struggle with a nervous malady.

It is not actually necessary to go as far as the Swedish writer, M. Bjerre, who finds in Nietzsche's deliberate and revolutionary transvaluation of values that break up of the cerebral system from its previous condition which signalises the earlier stages of general paralysis. Yet Nietzsche's own writings, particularly his letters, reveal how potent was the stimulus exercised on his ego by those nervous headaches which hounded him over the Continent. To prevent defeat his will had to be perpetually strained to the maximum pitch of tension. The sweets of comfort being denied him, the only alternative left was to find a kind of super-happiness in the ecstasies and exultations of that Titanic contest which was perpetually fought on the battlefield of his own person. Let him speak for himself: "I made of my wish to get well, to live, my philosophy—it should, in fact, be noted—the years when my vitality descended to its minimum were those when I ceased to be a pessimist."

We have not, however, at this juncture space to elaborate further the theory of the superman. Let it be enough to say that it is the raising to the *n*th power of the spirit of struggling and aggressive efficiency, and the venting of an over-full vitality by the creation of new values out of the wealth of the individual ego. As, however, the glorification of strength involves, and logically so, the degradation of weak-

ness, and "to build up a sanctuary it is necessary for a sanctuary to be destroyed," it is not surprising that Nietzsche should clear the ground for his new creations by a ferocious bombardment of the crumbling ruins that still encumbered the site. Schopenhauer, who had been the fount from which Nietzsche's philosophic youth had drawn its inspiration before, as it were, he had found him out, is always treated with a certain amount of respect. But the arch-enemy was the, to him, poisonous system of altruism, self-annihilation, and world-renouncement which was called Christianity.

The cynical may smile at the inordinate and concentrated frenzy of this attack. "Is not your wildly militant prophet simply wasting his powder and shot? Who in his senses ever heard of Christianity being taken *au pied de la lettre*, even by the most orthodox of modern bishops? What is it, to use another metaphor, but flogging a dead horse?" To which Nietzsche's answer would be that it is by removing the foundations that you remove also the superstructure, or to translate our metaphor, "Let me kill Christianity, and I kill at the same time all that system of altruism for altruism's sake, of abstract truth for the sake of abstract truth, which is built on that hateful foundation." It may also be observed that, even apart from the poetic and prophetic licence to which a man writing under such circumstances would be legitimately entitled, there are even now not wanting people who do in point of fact take Christianity with all the implicit seriousness of the mediæval monks or the early Fathers. It is, indeed, a phenomenon not without a certain intrinsic humour, that almost at the very moment when Tolstoi was making his pathetic efforts to resuscitate literal Christianity with the abortive tears of pity, Nietzsche should

swing along to flagellate the semi-inanimate ghost of the bleeding God, in no monkish spirit, forsooth, but with all the grim and scientific energy of the most enthusiastic of executioners, compared to whom Voltaire was but the most urbane of wits, and Heine the most innocuous of schoolboys. Having thus taken a brief view of the targets, and of the implacable and very serious spirit that animates the assailant, let us glance briefly at the chief lines of attack.

II

The first essay of the Genealogy consists of an essay on "Good and Evil, Good and Bad." The line of attack is double, being first etymological, and secondly historical.

Without going into philological exactitudes, it is, we think, fairly safe to follow Nietzsche in his theory that the word "good" and its analogues were originally applied to designate those qualities which were peculiar to the governing aristocratic classes, albeit qualities by no means susceptible of the title of "ethical" goodness. Physical valour being in primitive times the most valuable asset of the community, it is not unnatural that that quality should be held in universal esteem. We would remark, however, in passing, that though Nietzsche professes to make a flying expedition into the domain of early Greek ethics, which would appear, according to his teachings, to be represented as an ideal system worthy of modern imitation, he is apparently oblivious to the fact that the spirit of cunning prudence, of which he so emphatically disapproves, was one of the most admired qualities of primitive Greece.

On the general question, however, we may perhaps supplement Nietzsche's by Spencer's argument

on the meaning of the English word "good," which, as is notorious, has the double meaning of "ethical" and "efficient." Instructive, however, though this argument is, it cannot be said to clinch the question, since, even in the times of ancient Greece, there were not wanting words such as κάλος, αἴσχρος, ὅσιος to denote, albeit mostly in æsthetic terminology, that ethical meaning, of which the word ἄγαθος fell so signally short. In other words, to use Nietzschean terminology, the ethical taint even then existed, though in a less virulent form.

The other line of attack, however, is more serious, and penetrates to the very core of the modern moral system with its savage onslaught on Christianity. What is Christianity, says Nietzsche, but the revolt of the slaves in the sphere of morals? Our philosopher's suggestion, of course, that Christianity was a deliberate stratagem on the part of a revengeful Israel to square accounts with the conqueror, has, on the face of it, no claim to serious consideration as anything but a poetic thought. The fact, however, that Christianity from its beginning catered avowedly for the poor, the weak, the oppressed, the inefficient, is admittedly true, whatever disputes may range as to the inferences to be drawn from this fact. And that the accusation of being a slave-morality is something more than empty abuse, is substantiated by the numerous slaves who did, in fact, subscribe to the infant creed. It is, moreover, not without its interest to watch nowadays a recurrence of the same phenomenon. Just, indeed, as at present the proletariate are *ipso facto* ready to believe, quite apart from any question of any economic justification of the doctrine, in the genuine iniquity of the rich capitalist, so in the early Christian era the proletariate were not reluctant to put their faith in the saying, that, "it was as

easy for a camel to go through the eye of a needle as for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." The difference, however, between modern and ancient Christianity stands out clearly from the fact that though this identical creed is invoked with something approaching equal facility on the sides both of the angels and the devils, it is, on the whole, now identified with the richer and more prosperous classes.

It must, however, be frankly admitted that Nietzsche somewhat overshoots the mark, both in dubbing the history of the world a conflict between the two ideals, of Rome and Judæa, the egoistic and altruistic ideals, and in asseverating that the primitive "beast of prey prowling avidly after booty and victory" was the only type of the human species worthy of admiration, and that the tamed modern species is but a diseased distortion. We will deal later with the lacuna caused in Nietzsche's philosophy by his refusal to recognise the true significance of the Aristotelian doctrine that man is a ζῶον πολίτικον when we show that even from his own standpoint the modern state of man is preferable to the primal. Suffice it for the present to say that, however large a part of the truth Nietzsche captured with this potent theory, there remains a not inconsiderable part which still eluded him.

III

Having endeavoured thus to dispose of the "ethically good" and "ethically bad" by the theory that such ideas are merely distortions of the ideas of "practically good and practically bad," Nietzsche in the second essay of the Genealogy makes a similar effort to take the sting out of the ideas of "Schuld" (guilt, debt), and "schlechtes Gewissen" (bad conscience). But here, again, difficulties beset our revolu-

tionary. He approves of responsibility and the sacredness of the promise, but disapproves of the bad conscience by which the individual would enforce these things on himself. He blesses justice, but damns the social system. We shall find it hard to follow him in his attempted reconciliation of these divergent standpoints. When, for instance, he alludes with almost paternal approbation to the savage mnemonics by which the "conscience" (*per se*) was produced, and then proceeds to an envenomed, if none the less brilliant polemic against the "bad conscience," we see that in reality it is not so much the existence of a conscience *quâ* conscience, to which he objects, but the existence of a conscience functioning on what he conceives to be a vicious basis. Indeed, even the most faithful of our prophet's disciples would admit that the Nietzschean teaching lays down as thorny and toilsome a path for the "bold, bad man," or *übermensch*, as Christianity ever decreed for the good man or weakling. The only difference, in fact, between Nietzschean and Christian ethics is that between excessive self-affirmation and excessive self-negation. But one has only to read *Zarathustra* to realise immediately that this self-affirmation is no heedless hedonism, but a tense and chronic struggle of the ego against the world, subject to as rigid rules and braving as intense martyrdoms as does the Christian struggle of the spirit against the flesh. We may say, in fact, that on an officially Nietzschean basis the "bad" man who fails in being thoroughly and perfectly bad is, and apparently properly so, subject to as poignant pangs as is the "good" man who fails in being thoroughly and perfectly good.

Granted, however, that it is the content of the bad conscience rather than the existence of a bad conscience *per se*, which provokes his righteous indigna-

tion, let us make some attempt to see how far Nietzsche is logical in condemning, as he does, existing ethics as the bastard child of contract and revenge, thriving amid a civilisation which has no real right to exist. Nietzsche starts off in fine feather to prove that the word "Schuld" (guilt) is the same as the word "Schuld" (debt), as though that momentous piece of philological research crushed all ethics once and for all. We do not for a moment dispute the philology. Moreover, as far as the general principle is concerned, it had been previously pointed out by Maine that all crimes were in their origin torts—that is to say, private wrongs against the individual (though doubts as to how far this theory is to be carried are raised by the universal execration which even in the most primitive societies was visited on murderers like Cain or Orestes).

It may, moreover, be true that in many cases the local god is simply a deceased ancestor promoted to a heavenly status, who requires payment for protecting his descendants. But such arguments can at the best merely have effect on the theological conception of morality as a divine ordinance descending immediately from heaven. From the sociological standpoint, indeed, to derive "ethics" from "contract" is simply to consolidate one phase of the social instinct by deriving it from another. As, however, has been hinted before, it was the theological conception that was Nietzsche's main objective. So long as he could kill that, he was indifferent to the price, if, indeed, his morbidly classic and aristocratic standpoint did not hold that the taint of the bourgeois and the *βάναυσος* attached automatically to everything commercial.

The shifts, however, to which Nietzsche is driven are well illustrated when we come to that further

stage in his evolution of the moral idea, which consists in deriving modern ethics or the "bad conscience" from the principle of "resentment" or "revenge," which is alleged to be a totally distinct thing from the "active feeling" by which Justice enforces its sanctions. But with all due respect to Nietzsche and his official expounders, we find it hard to appreciate any real difference in principle between the various drastic measures by which the social organism enforces its decree. The punishment for murder, we suggest, would be equally death both in a Nietzschean and in a non-Nietzschean state, and how anything more than the merest verbal distinction is achieved by labelling one sanction the "active emotion of justice" and the other "the principle of resentment" we are frankly at a loss to conceive. We can only say that the basing of the "bad conscience" on the spirit of revenge is true in the sense that from one aspect the function of the social organism is to protect the many against the few by the enforcements of drastic punishments against its transgressors. That, moreover, the strong are unduly restricted to pamper the weak is an arguable proposition, how arguable, can be seen from the present volubility of the financially strong when menaced nowadays with taxation for the benefit of the financially weak. But to go to the length of saying that the whole social fabric is a morbid distortion, a thing intrinsically bad, a kind of quasi-theological fall from an ideal state of primitive anarchy, is, at the most charitable estimate, a mere piece of poetic extravagance. Yet to this length Nietzsche goes when he pictures his blonde primæval beast swung into "new situations and conditions of existence"; in other words, into the "pale of society with a spring and rush." The apparent

suddenness of the transition strikes us, indeed, as naïf as the philosophy of Rousseau or of Hobbes, who actually conceived the social contract as a specific bargain entered into at a specific time.

One of the most interesting parts, however, of the whole essay is Nietzsche's explanation of the "bad conscience" as the result of the primitive energy of the savage venting itself in psychological self-torture when debarred from its natural outlet of physical violence. "All instincts which do not vent themselves without vent themselves within," so runs the dictum of the prophet, a dictum no doubt of great psychological truth, and capable of concrete illustration when applied to nuns, monks, and other ascetics, or to definite cases of neurotic introspection, but clearly not deserving to be treated as the key to the whole social fabric.

We have already remarked that the real weakness of the Nietzschean philosophy lay in the neglect of the Aristotelian theory that man was a ζῶον πολίτικον or a social animal. Let us resume this line of inquiry. Nietzsche does, it is true, refer to the "herd instinct" of the weak, but only to exhibit his very palpable contempt against the weak who herd together so as to be able effectually to combat the strong. A yet further proof of Nietzsche's bitter hatred of the social organism is supplied by the celebrated phrases in *Zarathustra*, "as little state as possible," and "the slow suicide which we call the state." In our view, however, the real test of Nietzsche's position is touched when we come to the position of the aristocratic strong man. "Are they," one wonders, "tainted or untainted with the herd instinct?" Nietzsche's answer to this question seems to be that, so far as concerns the vast bulk of the herd, they are inimical to the social instinct, but that none the less they find

social organisation (apparently that identical state which we have seen spoken of as "slow suicide") necessary, not only for keeping the herd in proper order, but for the purpose of "their own fight with other complexes of power." Viewed impartially, however, it does not seem to us that Nietzsche pays sufficient importance to the universality and value of the social instinct. Perhaps the root of the whole matter lies in the fact that Nietzsche fixes apparently the human unit as the individual, whereas, in point of fact, it is that state in miniature, the family. The origin of the family may no doubt be found in the primæval instincts of sex and parentship. None the less, it is an indisputed sociological fact that the family, or its larger manifestation the tribe, is, as is evident from the slightest perusal of the works of Darwin, Maine, or Westermarck, the primitive form of human life. It would obviously be outside the scope of this preface to go in detail into the whole question of the origin of society, but it would also appear an indisputable platitude that man, *quâ* man, thrives by co-operation and association. In economical terminology this truth is known as the division of labour, in sociology by our frequently quoted Aristotelian dictum that man is a social animal. Nietzsche, it is true, tries to evade, or at any rate minimise, the force of this fact by treating law as the concrete exemplification of might is right. This, of course, is true as far as it goes, but it is only one side of the medal. All law is based on sovereignty, and all sovereignty is in the last resort based on force. It is possible, no doubt, for this force, this ultimate sanction to be exercised on approved Nietzschean principles by the few against the many. To quote the words of Ihering, the great Austrian jurist: "And so force, when it allies itself with insight and self-control, produces law.

It is the origin of law out of the power of the stronger who stands in opposition to another, of which we now begin to get a glimpse." Yet, even though for the moment we confine ourselves to this aspect, it is obvious that while such a law subjugates the weak to the strong, it also regulates and curtails the rights of the strong among themselves, creating, as it were, a state within a state, or, to use once again the language of Ihering, "the self-limitation of force in its own interest." Equally important, however, is the obverse side of the medal, on which appears the exercise of the ultimate sanction by the many against the few. To quote Ihering for the last time: "The crucial point in the whole organisation of law is the preponderance of the common interests of all over the particular interests of the individuals." The vice, then, of Nietzsche's theory is that he bisects law into its two constituent phases, ignores one phase and confines himself to the other, apparently in blissful oblivion of the fact that even in the most aristocratic of aristocracies there exists, even though in miniature, the "slow suicide of the state."

There is a further criticism which seems to arise properly out of Nietzsche's vehement denunciation of civilisation. The state and civilisation are bad according to Nietzsche, because they take the sting out of this struggle for existence, and cut the fangs of the superman. But, according to Nietzschean principles, are they not equally good in so far as they enable the superman to refine and elaborate his scale of combat? It is, indeed, obvious that the intellectualisation of the blonde beast of primitive times into the newspaper proprietor, American financier, or revolutionary philosopher of modernity would have been impossible but for the intervention of a very highly developed social organism. Yet even the most confirmed Nietzschean

would admit that Mr. Rockefeller is, in spite of his evangelistic proclivities, a more highly developed specimen of the superman than Tamerlane, and Lord Northcliffe than, say, Cæsar Borgia.

One final observation: according to Nietzsche the test of merit is efficiency and the test of efficiency is success. Supposing, however, that a large number of individuals comparatively weak overpower through sheer force of combination a small number of individuals comparatively strong. Are not the weak changed into the strong, and conversely? We do not say that this is necessarily so: we merely adduce the argument to show how easily Nietzschean principles lend themselves to exploitation at the hands of the Socialists.

Nietzsche's philosophy, however, was above all didactic, missionary. He analysed contemporary morality, not by way of an academic or scientific exercise, but with a view to striking, and striking hard, at that aspect of it which he quite honestly believed to be vicious and deleterious. Hence it is that having in his first two essays dealt with the etymological and legal aspects of the question, he now goes straight to the root of the whole matter. What is the practical application of all these tendencies which he has analysed? The ascetic ideal—and against this ideal our teacher proceeds to deliver as tense and concentrated a sermon as ever fell from the lips of any denouncer of the luxurious or non-ascetic ideal. We have not space, unfortunately, to follow Nietzsche through his elaborate analysis both of the ascetic ideal in its origin and in its eventual distortion and corruption at the hands of the ascetic priest. We will only observe that to grasp properly Nietzsche's position, stress should be laid on the fact that in the same way in which it was not the conscience *per se*, but

the current content of the conscience, so it was not asceticism *per se*, but the current content of asceticism to which Nietzsche objected.

As he explains in drastic and elaborate style, the philosopher, like the jockey or the athlete, would, through the simple exigencies of his *métier*, live the ascetic life. In such cases asceticism is simply the mechanical condition precedent of complete concentration. Similarly, the *übermensch* (superman) would no doubt be compelled to live the ascetic life in his strenuous struggle with subsisting values. The asceticism, however, to which Nietzsche in fact did object, was the asceticism which was not like the philosopher's asceticism, a means to creating or promoting actual human life, but was a means to destroying and minimising actual human life, the asceticism which denied the right to happiness, and which found in sin the solution to the riddle of the human world.

Indeed, it is thoroughly characteristic of Nietzsche's whole attitude that he demurs vigorously to almost any solution of the riddle of the world. According to his reasoning, the need for any solution at all, whether transcendental, after the pattern of Kant and the Idealists, or quasi-transcendental, after the pattern of the pseudo-metaphysics of the scientists, argues an inability to take life on its own merits and on its own valuation.

Let us finally glance briefly at the practical application of the Nietzschean philosophy, a course thoroughly consistent with the intensely practical spirit of our prophet. We are at first almost overwhelmed by the heterogeneous character of those who profess to be the true disciples of the great master, a character so heterogeneous, forsooth, that Nietzsche seems occasionally to be nothing but a catch-word mouthed by every conceivable school of

thought with the rankest impunity. The Socialists, conveniently forgetting the opprobrious designation by the sage as "spiders," and their apostolic "Man is not equal," which he had thundered forth, find a bond of sympathy in their common disapproval of Christianity, though even here their standpoints are radically different, since while the "tarantulæ" rebelled against it as being too narrow a prison, Nietzsche scorns it as being too comfortable a lounge. Zarathustra, moreover, showed himself truly Persian in his repudiation of the claims of the child-bearing machine called woman to equal rights with the warrior-man: "When thou goest with women," quoth the prophet, "forget not the whip." Nothing daunted, however, the shrieking hordes of the ultra-modern sisterhood, from the "Free Lover" to the "Ethical Lifer," find in Nietzsche the most emphatic justification for alike their theories and their practices. Does not *Es Lebe das Leben*, the well-known drama of Sudermann, portray the philosophical dogma of self-expression leading to highly unphilosophic applications? Does not the Scandinavian writer and woman with a mission, Ella Key, start her book *Personality and Beauty* with the following quotations from Nietzsche: "Follow after thyself—what says thy conscience?—thou shalt be that which thou art—let the highest self-expression be thy highest expression." Truly the Nietzschean aphorisms seem caps guaranteed to fit the most diverse heads so, but they show the slightest disposition to tumidity. Young men and nations in a hurry, Socialists and aristocrats, æsthetes and "woman's righters," all combine in a cacophonous chorus well calculated to make the shade of Zarathustra, should he visit Europe, hasten back in disgust to the mountain peaks of his solitude.

Yet, however susceptible to abuse the Nietzschean philosophy may be, such a multifarious exploitation, though repudiated from the official standpoint, does not strike us as necessarily illogical. The doctrine of the superman, indeed, has in Nietzsche two distinct meanings—the evolution of generic man to his extreme limit, as exemplified in the aphorism, "Man is a bridge between beast and superman," and secondly the idealisation of the clash between the individual and society, the apotheosis of the aggressive combatant element in man, the τὸ θυμοειδες of the Platonic trinity. Yet, whatever meaning may be chosen, it is well-nigh impossible to prevent individuals from cherishing the honest and sincere belief that in developing themselves (whether with or without the rigid discipline incumbent upon the orthodox superman), they are either helping the development of the race, or providing a picturesque expression of a considerably altered, but still authentic, "Athanasius contra mundum." With the present boom no doubt Nietzscheanism may become a craze (in Germany, of course, it is already *passé* and has become academic and respectable), like the æstheticism of the Wilde period and grown liable to equal if dissimilar perversions.

Yet none the less, if taken very broadly and very sanely, Nietzsche is capable of constituting a valuable modern bible for the twentieth-century man who proposes to live vastly and to play for grand stakes. It may no doubt be true that while Heine and Voltaire merely shot poisoned arrows at Christianity, Nietzsche blew it clean away with the giant salvos of his artillery ; yet on the tremendous space that he cleared he built a temple to Energy and Efficiency. And note, that he worships these deities not for any ulterior advantage, but for their own sake solely. His frenzy

for life precludes him at once from being a pessimist; it does not follow, however, that he is an optimist (in the hedonistic sense of the word), for neither in his own life, nor in his conception of that of others, do we find it clearly expressed that the pleasures of life outweigh the pains. More accurate is it to say that he is a philosophy transcending optimism. "On! On!! On!!! Live! Live!! Live!!! whatever the result and whatever your fate. Fight life and chance everything, for the fight's the thing rather than the mere trumpery guerdon." So we would venture to phrase the true Nietzschean spirit, or if an actual quotation is required, "*I say unto you it is not the good cause which sanctifies the war, but the good war which sanctifies the cause.*"

The most marvellous thing, however, about this grim lust of life is that it is absolutely insatiate, absolutely infinite. According to the theory of the Eternal Return, the events of this life will repeat and repeat with the tireless inevitability of a recurring decimal. Taken literally, no doubt this theory is simply the mystical dance of a Titanic mind striving to scale infinity. But the psychological significance is none the less profound. Is it not turning the tables with a vengeance on the Christian idea of a prospective non-earthly existence, compared with which this existence is a mere shadowy preparation, to pile future life on future life on future life, and every one of them a repetition of man's life on earth? It is impossible for the affirmation of human existence to be carried further. And this human existence, what is its solution? None, or rather itself! Existence is its own sanction, its own *raison d'être*, and he who coldly ravishes the sphinx of life has found a drastic solution far excelling that of any Œdipus.

AUGUST STRINDBERG

"I seek God and find the Devil."

"My hate is boundless as the wastes, burning as the sun, and stronger than my love."

THE above quotations give some idea of that black pessimism which is, at any rate, the most patent characteristic of Strindberg. Yet neither quotation, motto, nor catchword can do justice to the multifarious life and character of this man. For Strindberg, more than any other European author of our age, has boxed the whole compass of our modernity with its tumults, its aspirations, its perversities; its glaring searchlights of science, its pallid flames of mysticism, and its needle ever pointing to the two opposite though connected poles of sex. He is in turns the most rabid of atheists, the most devout of Catholics, the most esoteric of occultists; now the most Utopian of Socialists, now the most uncompromising of individualists. Running the gauntlet of three unhappy and dissolved marriages, he has become the European specialist in conjugal infelicity, to say nothing of being credited with innumerable conquests, which he himself would doubtless have designated as captures. His novels, his autobiographies, and his equally subjective dramas all exhale the most sulphurous hate against the distorted anomaly of the new woman, yet he is an Orpheus who, scorning the prosaic joys of some normal and uninteresting Eurydice, surrenders himself with almost patho-

logical gusto to be torn to pieces by the monstrous mænads of modernity. The paroxysms of his hate alternate with moods of the most sentimental idealism, and the harsh impetus of his onslaught is only equalled by the, at times, abject meekness of his romantic devotion.

Before, consequently, we embark on some slight survey of Strindberg's life and of the more characteristic of his numerous works, let us endeavour to lay hold of the clues of one or two primary features which will serve as a guide in the, at first sight, extremely tangled labyrinth of his psychology.

Now the dominant emotion in Strindberg's temperament is fear. It is this fear which, at times assuming the dimensions of *paranoia* or systematised delusion and persecution mania, largely supplies the explanation to his whole attitude towards Man, Woman, and God. He possessed also a vehemently explosive egoism and a gigantic intellect, at times dominating his fear and functioning with the most powerful precision, but as often as not interpreting the whole external world in the terms of some preconceived subjective emotion. Add also a morbidly hypertrophied sexual sensibility, together with a distinct strain of genuine idealism, and one may perhaps be able to envisage with some accuracy the cardinal points of our author's brain.

August Strindberg was born in 1849, the son of a *mésalliance* between a shipping agent and a servant girl. The circumstances of his childhood tended to magnify that morbid sense of fear which, according to our most eminent psychologists, is always innate and never altogether acquired. The two parents, the seven children, and the two servants lived in two rooms, and the family always appeared to him like "a prison in which two prisoners watched each other,

a place where children were tortured and maids brawled." His mother died when he was thirteen, to be succeeded by the inevitable stepmother. His school life also was unhappy, but his description of it, though no doubt perfectly consistent with actual hardship, exhibits at the same time the reactions of a morbid sensibility to the hard facts of external life. "Life was a penitentiary for crimes which one had committed before one was born, so that the child always went about with a bad conscience."

Note also, at the same time, the presence of the combative aggressive element in the boy who would lose nearly every game of chess by the inconsidered vehemence of his attack, or would break open chests of drawers in the fury of his desire to obtain their contents. And observe the early manifestations of that fundamental emotion which was to obtain throughout his life alternative outlets in the two parallel channels of religion and sex. Thus, like Byron, he experienced a violent passion for a girl before the age of puberty. So far, again, as religion was concerned, he had a great horror of darkness and the unknown, and his deity would appear to have been a god rather of fear than of love. And though Scandinavians as a race take Christianity far more seriously than the inhabitants of any other European country, he would appear to have possessed, even for a Scandinavian, the religious temperament to an unusual degree. Thus, he said his prayers on his way to school, and evinced a precocious desire to become a priest. But the religious element became dormant amid the chequered vicissitudes which signalised his youth and his adolescence. He started to study medicine at the University of Upsala, but his lack of funds broke into his college career and compelled him to earn his

own living. He is by turns telegraph clerk, editor of an insurance paper (for which purpose he specially learns the higher mathematics), tutor in the family of a rich Jewish physician, actor in the Karl Moor of Schiller's *Robbers*, journalist on a daily paper (where the drastic offensiveness of his criticisms made his position on the staff intolerable), and librarian in the Royal Library of Stockholm (when he specially learns Chinese for the purpose of compiling a catalogue). His struggles were bitter and continued, and the acuteness of his privations manifests itself in a deep consciousness of class hatred against the prosperous and not infrequently dishonest philistinism of the day.

Note, also, the occurrence of combined religious and persecution mania in the crises of his illness and despondency. For at such times he takes the Devil himself as seriously as the Deity, believes in an "Evil God to whom the Creator had handed over the world," and "has the consciousness of being personally persecuted by personal powers of evil." These emotional outbursts are all the more interesting because intellectually he had become the most fanatical of freethinkers, had read with profit Buckle's *History of Civilisation in England*, and was a fervent disciple of the new naturalism. During this period he had already begun to write dramas, none of which, however, have any substantial significance with the possible exception of the historical drama *Meister Olof*, which was unsuccessfully performed in 1877–8, and into which the already misogynous author had introduced the character of the prostitute, "in order to show that the difference between her and the ordinary woman is not so enormously great."

In 1879, however, Strindberg achieved a *succès de*

scandale with his novel *The Red Room.* The satire of this book (written, it will be remembered, during his freethought years), may, no doubt, be the milk of Christian charity when compared with the concentrated vitriol of the *Black Flags* of his Catholic period, and the various scenes and pictures may, no doubt, strike the critic as episodic and lacking in systematic cohesion, yet the work has some claim to recognition by reason of the vivid force of its description of contemporaneous life. The naïvely idealistic hero, the shady actress passing from seduction to seduction with all the facility of the experienced *ingénue*, the respectable director of the shoddy insurance company, the insidious Jewish financial broker, the cynical journalist, the grim but benevolent doctor, are all portrayed in a style which at once shines and chills with all the brightness of the coldest steel. Viewed psychologically, the book is significant as exhibiting the Socialistic fury of an embittered man "whose class-hatred lay in his blood and in his nerves," and who revenges himself on the system which had conspired against him, by exposing with sinister precision its most repulsive truths.

The cynicism of *The Red Room* was succeeded by the Utopian romanticism of the dramas, *Das Geheimniss der Gilde, Frau Margit, Gluckspeter.* The change in mood is probably to be ascribed to the vogue of *The Red Room*, and to the initial success of his alliance with his first wife, Siri von Essen, the actress, whom he had married in 1878, and who was subsequently to enjoy the ambiguous blessing of being officially immortalised in *The Confession of a Fool.*

This mood, in its turn, was soon replaced by a concentrated and fanatical misogynism which was to dominate practically every book which Strindberg was subsequently to write. The fundamental cause

was, no doubt, the morbidly irritable and suspicious nature of the man himself. Strindberg's whole attitude towards woman, however, is only fully understood by some appreciation of the New Woman Movement, which under the auspices of Ellen Key flourished vigorously in Sweden in the "eighties." Like, for instance, our own Suffragette agitation, or indeed, any popular craze, however intrinsically meritorious, this movement, which was, above all, a crusade for sexual equality, was attended by wild and perverse extravagances. Not merely the genuinely masculine woman, but every little doll of a woman in every little doll's house, became obsessed with the imperative necessity of the emancipation of her own body and the self-development of her own soul. A holy war of the sexes was proclaimed, and the sacred shibboleth of the New Thought, the New Ethics, and the New Love was soon in the mouth of every woman possessed of the true feminine *esprit de corps*. And with the praiseworthy object of adjusting the balance of nature, and of arriving so far as possible at the ideal harmony of an almost perfect equation, in some cases even the little boys would be brought up as girls, while, conversely, the little girls would be educated as boys.

But the misogynism of Strindberg was something far more than a merely intellectual appreciation of the Anti-Feminist standpoint. Even making allowance for the considerable impetus doubtless given to his attack by reason of his personal matrimonial complications, the cause lay far more deeply ingrained in his own constitution. For the arrogation by the female of equal rights to the male would of itself tend to provoke the violent apprehensiveness of a man always morbidly alarmed at the slightest suggestion of any interference

with his own personal rights, and always scenting a grievance with all the superhuman *flair* of the true maniac of persecution. Strindberg's hatred of woman is thus to a large extent the hatred self-begotten of fear out of its own spirit, and without the superfluous aid of a concrete reality. If, too, we identify Strindberg himself with some of his men characters (*e.g.* Kurt in *The Death Dance*, Axel in *Playing with Fire*, or the narrator of *The Confession of a Fool*), who render to the objects of their passion acts of the most abject servility, and who kiss the feet of women almost as frequently as their lips, we would hazard the suggestion that he himself (who owns to having found in his reverence for woman a substitute for his reverence for God) would in certain moods welcome with morbid alacrity this new feminine domination, while his reaction from this inverted attitude would but lash his misogynism to even more hysterical paroxysms.

These considerations may perhaps explain why in so many of his works the Strindberg woman and the Strindberg man are so highly specialised. The typical Strindberg woman is a fiend with the physique of a Madonna and the soul of a vampire, who sucks dry the life-blood of her heroic victim. The typical Strindberg man is a Samson shorn of his strength, writhing in the toils of some Delilah, protesting vociferously, and yet taking a morbid delight in his own bondage. English readers will remember the not altogether unanalogous case of John Tanner, that converse Don Juan of Mr. Shaw, who, with all his fanfaronnade of masculine independence, is, as he has from the beginning feared, anticipated and desired, successfully hunted down by his sly and dashing *Donna Juana*.

After the publication of *The Red Room*, Strindberg

visited both Switzerland and Paris, where he was invited to meet Björnsen, entered into relations with the Théâtre Libre of M. Antoine, had one or two of his plays produced, and meditated an unfortunately written satire on the French capital. In 1883 he produced *Swedish Destinies*, a volume of essays on contemporary problems, whose romantic masquerade would seem to have effectively concealed its underlying satire.

The most significant work, however, which he published at this period was the volume of twelve (subsequently expanded to twenty) short stories, entitled *Marriage*. These tales all treat of the various phases, economic, social, psychological, and physiological, of the sexual problem, which he observed either in his own life or in the couples whom he saw in a Swiss *pension*. The characteristic of this work is its extraordinary seriousness. For to Strindberg the sexual problem provides neither the excuse for the philosophic flippancy of the cynic, nor for the priggish modernity of the ethical or intellectual snob, but is the one obsessing reality of actual life.

Compared with the black pessimism of this work (relieved though it may be at times by a ray of tender sentiment or deep paternal feeling), the grimmest stories of Wedekind are benignly jovial and the most scabrous tales of De Maupassant but innocently sportive. Neither smile, nor even leer, ever breaks the set visage of this stern irony, which seems indistinguishable from life itself. There are no artificial climaxes or ostentatious flourishes of style to prick the senses of the reader. Described in a language of the most brutal phlegm and the most forceful simplicity, the facts of reality do their own unaided work. Each story is no mere dexterously elaborated incident, but a condensed life.

How powerful, for instance, is such a story as *Asra*, the history of the pious youth afflicted with anæmia by reason of his own continence, and dying two years after his marriage with that superabundantly healthy ethical worker who subsequently married twice again, had eight children, and wrote articles on over-population and immorality. And how genuinely awful is *Autumn*, that frigid anti-climax of a stale and re-hashed honeymoon:

"And she sang, 'What is the name of the land in which my darling dwells?' But, alas, the voice was thin and sharp. It was at times like a shriek from the depths of the soul that fears that the noon is passed, and that the evening is approaching. When the song was over, she did not at first dare to turn round, as though she was expecting that he would come to her and say something. But he did not come; and there was silence in the room. When at last she turned round on her chair, he sat on the sofa and cried. She wanted to get up, take his head in her hands, and kiss him as before; but she remained seated, motionless, with her gaze turned to the floor. . . .

"They drank coffee, and spoke about the coolness of the summer weather, and where they would spend the summer next year. But the conversation began to dry up; and they repeated themselves. At last he said, after a long, undisguised yawn, 'I'm going to bed now.' 'So will I,' she said, and got up, 'but I will go first and have a look on the balcony.'

"When she came back, she remained standing and listening at the door of the bedroom. All was quiet inside, and the boots were outside the door. She knocked, but there was no answer. Then she opened the door, and went in. He slept! He slept!"

Though, moreover, the characters in *Marriage* are more normal and average than in any other of Strindberg's works, the author airs again and again his pet sexual grievances. *Corinna*, in particular, and *The Duel*, are savage attacks respectively on the ethical amazon and the womanly woman who makes her very womanliness an engine of tyranny, while the *Breadwinner* narrates how an apparently quite impeccable husband and father, writing him-

self to death to support his family, was driven to suicide by the naggings and exactions of a querulous and discontented wife.

Marriage was succeeded by the Utopian *Swiss Tales;* but the strenuous economic struggles to which Strindberg was now subjected forced him to discard as insipid the vague compromise of free-thought and to drink the bracing tonic of a Nietzschean and self-reliant atheism. "God, Heaven, and Eternity had to be thrown overboard if the ship was to be kept afloat; and it had to be kept afloat because I was not alone . . . I became an atheist as a matter of duty and necessity."

Yet it is interesting to observe that, taking the solution of the World-Riddle as a matter of acute personal importance, he studies the whole history of mankind to satisfy himself that he is right in his conclusion, and that the element of superstition is still so strong that when his child is ill he prays, atheist that he is, with all the fervour of a Christian Scientist. To the period of his atheism are to be ascribed, with the exception of *Black Flags*, his most powerful, most drastic work, his two packed volumes of one-act plays, the autobiographic *Confession of a Fool*, and the Nietzschean novel, *The Open Sea.*

Note also that his matrimonial misery and his divorce from his first wife had given an additional poison to a sting which was always morbidly eager to inject its venom.

The plays of Strindberg belong to the naturalistic school of problem-play which was in full vogue during the period of their composition. Technically their originality lies in the intensity of their concentration. Though many of them are one-acters and they nearly all observe the unity of place, they re-

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semble less the ordinary curtain-raiser than the one solitary act round which the ordinary modern play is usually written. Each play is nothing but climax. Though in some cases they are nearly as long as ordinary drama, it is rare that they have any subsidiary characters. Even the protagonists are too occupied with the urgencies of their own immediate crises, and with exposing the nakedness of their own souls, to have time for either the artificial jewels of the Pinerovian epigram or the flying rockets of the Shavian dialectic. The problem is stuck too deep into their lives to require any artificial flourishing. Observe, too, that nearly every play is a variation on one theme, the mutual hate, fear, and war of a malevolent humanity. Their very love but sharpens their enmity, and they draw blood with nearly every word.

The three-act play, *The Father*, ventilates the author's chronic grievance of the ruin of the man by the woman. The plot is cruel in its simplicity. The husband, though in a state of acute nervous disorder, is not certifiable. The wife, anxious for a freer life, smuggles a doctor into the house, plays adroitly on the man's pet mania that he is not the father of his own daughter, forges in his handwriting a letter branded with insanity, goads him into throwing a burning lamp at her, and with the aid of his old nurse gets him by a ruse into a strait-jacket, in which he succumbs to a stroke. Yet with all its concentrated sensationalism, and work though it may be of a constitutional maniac of persecution, the play is too deep, too sincere, too fundamentally convincing to be ever near that line which separates the realm of tragedy from the pandemonium of melodrama. With what ghastly irony does the daughter innocently prick the sensitive sore in her father's brain:

[RITTMEISTER *sits huddled up on the settee.*

BERTHA. Do you know what you've done? Do you know you've thrown the lamp at Mamma?

RITTMEISTER. Have I?

BERTHA. Yes, you have. Just think if she'd been hurt?

RITTMEISTER. What would that have mattered?

BERTHA. You are not my father if you can talk like that.

RITTMEISTER (*gets up*). What do you say? Am I not your father? How do you know that? Who told you so? And who is your father, then? Who?

But of all Strindberg's plays, indisputably the most powerful is *Miss Julie*, that gripping tragedy of the over-sexed young woman who on an oppressive mid-summer evening insists on being seduced by her father's butler. The girl is of noble birth, and the duel of sex is intensified by the duel of class. In the fifty pages of this play, with its three characters of the woman, the butler, and the cook, which observes rigorously the Aristotelian unities, every element of the highest and gravest tragedy is introduced with the most accurate and natural psychology—the exaggerated dancing of the daughter of the house, who competes with her own cook for the favours of her own butler-lover; the ribald grins and songs of the servants; the mingled insolence, common sense, and respectfulness of the domestic; the hysterical reaction of the *declassée* and dishonoured girl. The following passages may perhaps give some faint idea of this work's sustained and infernal power:

[JOHN *opens the cupboard, takes a bottle of wine out, and fills two used glasses.*

THE YOUNG LADY. Where do you get the wine from?

JOHN. From the cellar.

THE YOUNG LADY. My father's burgundy.

JOHN. Ain't it good enough for his son-in-law?

THE WOMAN. Thief!

JOHN. Are you going to blab?

THE LADY. Oh—oh—the accomplice of a thief. . . .
JOHN. You hate men-folk, miss?
THE LADY. Yes, as a rule! . . . But at times, when I feel weak—ugh!
JOHN. You hate me, too?
THE LADY. Infinitely! I could have killed you like an animal . . .

And how clutching is the climax, when the girl, a simultaneous prey to nausea with life and to fear of death, persuades her domestic to hypnotise her into suicide at almost the precise minute when her father is ringing for his boots:

THE YOUNG LADY. Have you never been in a theatre and seen the mesmerist? He says to the subject: "Take the broom"; he takes it. He says "Sweep"; and he sweeps. . . .
JOHN (*takes his razor and puts it into her hand*). Here is the broom—go now where there's plenty of light—into the barn—and—(*whispers into her ear*).

Miss Julie is remarkable as being the only one of Strindberg's works in which the man comes off victorious with the exception of the four-act *Comrades*, that sombre comedy of Parisian artist life, where the crowing wife bullies her self-sacrificing husband on the score of having ousted him from the Salon by her own successful picture, only to be told that he had simply changed the numbers, and to be finally ejected from her perverted home by that reasserted man whose efficiency she had despised and exploited, but whose virile despotism she now begins to love.

In *The Creditor*, Strindberg treats again his favourite theme of the vampire woman and the spoliated man. Thekla, the usual worthless, demoniac female, having dissolved her marriage with the schoolmaster Gustav, has married the artist Adolph. The scene is the seaside. Thekla has gone off on some jaunt. Her

new husband, who is apparently even more miserable without than with his wife, is a nervous wreck. He makes the acquaintance of the old husband, who presents himself incognito to readjust the balance of his matrimonial account. Gustav plays with masterly hypnotism on the suggestibility of his colleague, making him doubt himself, his vocation, his health, and at last his wife. And then when his wife returns, and the enfeebled husband has made an abortive attempt at asserting his theoretic virile superiority, he makes love to the wife, is detected by the visitors, and goes back to his own solitary misery, to leave his wife stranded and his new confrère dead. Note, too, that here again the human triangle is complete in itself, and that the agony is protracted to the last shred of its passion without ever flagging for one single moment.

Space prohibits any complete discussion of the remaining plays in the cycle of Strindberg's *Eleven One-acters*. Yet we would mention *Motherly Love*, a variation on the theme of Mrs. Warren. The *souteneuse* mother, with all her loathsome affectation of wounded parental feeling, plays judiciously on the morbidly filial conscience of a clean-minded but weak-willed actress-daughter, prevents her from obtaining respectable friends or advancement on the stage, in order to preserve for herself her sole professional stock-in-trade.

Equally impressive is *The Bond*, which expresses in one divorce-court scene the whole mordant tragedy of wrangling matrimony and authentic parental affection.

In a lighter vein is *Playing with Fire*, the one real comedy which Strindberg ever wrote. In this the delightful *ménage* of a young son, a young wife, a young friend of the family, a young charity cousin, and

a philistine but by no means senile father, everybody is flirting with everybody else. Particularly admirable in its mixture of the comic and the ironic is the character and attitude of the conceited and ultra-modern artist-husband, genuinely jealous of that friend and of that wife whom he loves so sincerely, and yet throwing them into each other's arms in a compounded mood of priggish bravado and authentic affection. The friend, apprehensive lest he may have a bad conscience, is anxious to take a room in the village.

THE WIFE. Why don't you stay with us? Out with it.

THE FRIEND. I don't know. I think you ought to be left quiet. Besides it might happen that we should get fed up with each other.

THE WIFE. Are you fed up with us already? I tell you, it won't do. I tell you that if you stay out there in the village, people will begin to talk.

THE FRIEND. Talk? What will they talk about?

THE WIFE. Oh, you know perfectly well how stories get put together.

THE SON. You stay here—there's an end of it. Let them talk. If you stay here, it goes without saying that you're my wife's lover, and if you stay in the village, it goes without saying that you've broken with each other, or that I've kicked you out. Consequently, I think it more honourable for you to be regarded as her lover—eh, what?

THE FRIEND. You certainly express yourself with considerable lucidity; but in a case like this, I'd rather prefer to consider which is honourable for you two.

As we have already hinted, an additional bitterness had been introduced into Strindberg's misogynism by the unhappiness of his own first marriage, which was dissolved in 1889. It is this marriage which Strindberg celebrates in that phenomenal piece of official sexual autobiography, *The Confession of a Fool*, which has successfully scandalised the whole Continent of Europe. In comparison with this book the *New Machiavelli* is but the tamest Sunday-school reading,

and the romantic confessions of Mr. George Moore the merest healthy pranks of robustious youth. This work throughout has the real spontaneity of the genuine diary rather than the studied frankness of the elaborate literary artificer. The young librarian is in Stockholm. A young lady makes advances to him. "She has an adventurous appearance, hovering between the artist, the blue-stocking, the daughter of the house, the *fille de joie*, the new woman, and the coquette." She presses her suit, looks at him in an unambiguous manner, and "he only owes his virtue to her extraordinary ugliness." He is introduced to her friends, the Baron and Baroness X. He becomes the *ami de famille*. But the demon of sex is at work, and simply through keeping step with her in walking he will experience a unification of their whole nervous systems. Honourable man that he is, he runs away from danger, starts for Paris in a steamship, and is seen off amid the combined tears of the married pair. The ship sails. His nerves break down ; and in an hysterical paroxysm he insists on being disembarked, is attended by a priest and doctor at a small hotel, and returns post-haste to Stockholm. The Baroness runs away to a watering-place. But matters only progress with even greater rapidity on her return. The Baron is largely occupied with a cousin ; and an official declaration takes place between the wife and the lover. With ultra-modern honesty they immediately apprise the husband, who while giving them the widest margin within which to exercise their platonic affections, yet reposes implicit trust in their combined honour. A financial crash, however, disposes of the Baron ; and the gentleman is landed with his lady. There ensue all the joys and agonies of a ten-years' union. The couple are linked in the burning bonds of a mutual love and a mutual hate.

The author has to sacrifice his own well-being and career to push forward his wife in her amateurish efforts in journalism and acting. From that time "legal prostitution enters into the marriage. . . ." She belongs to the public, she makes up and dresses for the public, and she consequently becomes "a prostitute who will finally send in her bill for such and such services."

The moods alternate with the regularity of a pendulum. If at one moment "the nest of love has become transformed into a dog-kennel," and the author is morbidly jealous of nearly every man and every woman with whom his wife has the slightest acquaintance, strikes his wife, and endeavours to drown her; it is only subsequently, in the last stages of servile uxoriousness, to idolise her again as a martyr and as a saint. Six times does he leave her (expending on one occasion in debauchery the proceeds of his pawned wedding-ring), and six times does he return, only to draw up at last this monstrous dossier of his conjugal life: "The story is at an end, my beloved one; I have revenged myself; the account is squared."

Not altogether inexplicably, Strindberg has been much attacked on the score of this book. He has been charged with wickedly defaming an innocent and deserving woman. Yet even though the book be objectively false, it is subjectively true. It is impossible to doubt its prodigious sincerity, even though this merely be the implicit sincerity of persecution mania. Every single nuance of the emotions of a man who honestly thinks that he is being unscrupulously exploited is faithfully described. The book may shock by its vehement coldness, its abnormal callousness, its matter-of-fact explicitness; yet from the literary standpoint, its entire absence of affectation,

the drastic ease of its simplicity, the swift naturalness of its diction, cannot fail to convince. It stands out from the whole of European literature as the superlative masterpiece of suspicious love and monstrous morbid hate.

In the great novel, *By the Open Sea* (1890), Strindberg's Nietzschean mood achieves its grand zenith. The hero, Axel Borg (whom we may already remember from *The Red Room*), "instead of, like the weak Christians, embracing a God outside himself, took what he could seize with his own hands and in his own self, and sought to make his own personality into a complete type of humanity." Borg, who combines with the ideals of the superman the hypersensitiveness of the neurotic, lives the single life as an inspector of fishery in a little village on the Swedish coast, where the sea "frightens not like the forest with its dark mystery, but brings quietude like an open great big true eye." He is pursued and caught by an over-sexed young woman, realises her worthlessness, and sails out to commit suicide.

"Out toward the new Star of Christmas, ran his voyage, out over the Sea, the All-Mother, from whose bosom the first spark of life was kindled, the inexhaustible source of fertility and love, life's origin and life's foe."

This book, with its splendid nature-descriptions, the tragic dignity of its hero, and the azure swiftness of its limpid style, is one of Strindberg's most impressive feats. Yet even here the author's characteristic traits can be distinctly traced. The noble male is ruined by a despicable woman; while here, too, the cosmic mysticism of the professed atheist (whose mood can perhaps be best expressed by the worn *cliché* of "being in tune with the infinite"), reveals only too clearly the emotional bias of a fundamentally religious temperament.

This temperament was soon to manifest itself in the most tragic form. Jaded with literature, and unhappy again in his second marriage with the Austrian authoress, Frida Uhl, in 1893, Strindberg embarked on the study of chemistry, took rooms in the Latin quarter, attended the Sorbonne laboratories, and imagined that he had revolutionised science by the discovery of a new element in sulphur. He had by now attained the, to him, crucial period of the late "forties," and the chronic excesses of his emotionalism now assumed a religious form, to the accompaniment of the most acute mania of persecution.

His experiences in these years, 1895–8, are described in the *Inferno* and the *Legends*, works which the mystic and the psychologist can read with equal if heterogeneous edification. In these books, which are based on Strindberg's diaries during the actual time, the aberrations of a disorganised brain are set out with the most unconscious literary art. His delusions became systematised with all the ingenuity of the *paranoiac*. Every casual suggestion thrown up by his memory, or the events and associations of every-day life, every bit of science that he had ever studied or of mysticism that he had ever felt, are all utilised to build the infernal scheme of his mania. He is "the innocent sacrifice of an unjust persecution," the prey of unknown powers, the conducting-point of electrical streams from unknown agencies. He asks for a miracle and sees in the heavens the ten commandments and the name of Jehovah. His friend Popoffski (in point of fact, the Polish-German novelist Przybeszewski) has come to Paris; it is with the sole object of killing him by poison. His usual seat at his usual café is occupied; he is the victim of a universal conspiracy. Eventually the hells of his torment burn themselves out in an abject ecstasy of

atonement, in Catholicism, Swedenborgianism, and the bastard hybrid of a scientific occultism.

From this time the religious obsession sits upon most, if not all, of his subsequent work. To this mood are due the officially religious dramas *To Damascus*, *Midsummer*, the extremely weak *Advent and Easter*, his new-found theory of *The Conscious Will in the World-History*, his historical dramas (where the characters, particularly Luther, were too subjectively conceived to be historically convincing), and his *Dream-Play* (where telephones, lawyers, theatres, enchanted woods, Indra's daughter, military officers, married couples, casinos, poets, and ballet-dancers all combine to weave the filmy phantasmagoria of a Buddhistic reality). We may also mention in this connection the *Blue Books*, the official synthesis of his life (a series of miniature essays on such apparently heterogeneous subjects as, *inter alia*, Troy, Christ, electro-chemistry, botany, surds, Assyriology, optics, geology, Hammurabi, astrology, morphium, Swedenborgianism, spermatozoic analysis, mystic numbers, Kipling, and Jehovah).

Although, speaking generally, Strindberg achieved his masterpieces during the period of his atheism, many of his later works have indisputable value. The play *Intoxication* (1900), for instance (though the killing through sheer unconscious force of will, by the hero, of the child of one mistress, in order to gratify the caprice of another, may strike the unimaginative critic as slightly melodramatic, and his eventual retirement into a Catholic monastery as somewhat of an anti-climax), is a work of extraordinary power.

So also is the *Death Dance* (1900), in which the middle-aged captain and his *passée* wife grind each other to ruin and despair beneath the mutual millstones of their hate, "that most unreasonable hate,

without ground, without object, but also without end." Does not the author plumb the extreme depths of human malevolence in the passage in which the wife in company with her cousin is expecting her paralytic husband to fall down dead?

KARL. What are you looking at over there, dear, by the wall?
ALICE. I'm seeing if he's tumbled down.
KARL. Has he tumbled down?
ALICE. No, more's the pity. He deceives me in everything.

We would also mention the Maeterlinckian beauty of the *Crown Bride* and *Swan White* (1900), the heroine of which is an idealisation of the author's third wife, the actress, Harriet Bosse; the delicate fantasy of *Tales* (1908); and the *Swedish Miniatures*, of which the *Sacrifice Dance* in particular is a positive masterpiece of swift bloodiness.

Cruelty, moreover, is an integral element in at any rate primitive religion. This may conceivably explain why, faithfully fulfilling what he personally professed to have found a joyless duty, Strindberg successfully performed in *Black Flags*, his celebrated *roman à clef*, the intellectual flaying and dismemberment of all Stockholm Bohemia. It is amusing to remember that he successfully consulted the oracle of the Book of Job before he published the work in 1905, to face the protesting shrieks of his victims with all the devout conscience of some early priest of Thor who gravely officiates at some blood-stained human sacrifice.

It is outside the purpose of this essay to discuss whether these descriptions of the intellectual and sexual clique of the Swedish capital constitute a fair portrait or a monstrous defamation, or whether, for instance, Hanna Paj is a malignant travesty or a euphemistic delineation of that lady whom all who have the slightest acquaintance with the Continental Feminist Movement will immediately recognise.

As a sheer piece of satire the book waves its black flag unchallenged amid all the fluttering multi-coloured pennons of modern European literature. What matter if the characterisation be true or false? So far, at any rate, as the non-Swedish reader is concerned, the illusion is complete. Kilo, "the little bookseller, with the suffering eyes of a sick dog"; Falkenstrom, the idealist, whose wife is induced by her bosom friend to join some alleged monstrous cosmopolitan masonic sisterhood; Hanna Paj, the feminist lecturer, the fury with the flag of hate on which was written the device, "Revenge on Man"; Smartman, the debonair intriguing editor with his two sets of rooms—all these pictures of "the galley-slaves of ambition linked together in the fetters of interest, these murderers and thieves who steal each other's thoughts, addresses, friends, and personalities," are perfectly convincing. Above all there stands out the delineation of Lars Peter Zachrisson, "the intellectual cannibal," the "broker of literature, the promoter of mutual admiration societies, the speculator in reputations, the founder of syndicates for the manufacture of celebrities," the morphia maniac, the tippler "who laughs humorously in his moustache and weeps tears of whisky from his eyes," the father of "that resurrected corpse, that wandering shame, whose face was known to all, and who was branded with his own name." And how devilish is the description of this domestic hell of human hate, where he mocks his wife on her failing charms and encourages her gluttony with the specific object of spoiling her figure, where the mother in her turn brings up her children like a breed of dachshunds whom she sets to bait their father, and where the two spouses yet feel some inexplicable need of being together in the same

room for the purpose of that mutual nagging and mutual reviling which constituted the chief interest in their miserable existence.

To sum up, we have seen how throughout his life the persecution mania of Strindberg expressed itself in his attitude to sex, religion, and society, as like at once some veritable Rhadamanthine recorder, and some cowering victim of divine vengeance, he dispenses and fears those words of doom in his black adamant of diction. Yet it is impossible casually to brush the man aside as some mere *paranoiac.* The very torments of his soul fructified in the stupendous genius of his intellectual production. With all his perversities, with all his aberrations, Strindberg remains the blackest, and in his own particular spheres the most drastic, intelligence in the whole of our European literature.

THE WELTANSCHAUUNG OF MISS MARIE CORELLI

"By my faith I would as soon listen to the gabbling of geese in a farmyard as to the silly glibness of such inflated twaddling, such mawkish sentiment, such turgid garrulity, such ranting verbosity."

"Clearness of thought, brilliancy of style, beauty of diction, all these were hers united to consummate ease of expression and artistic skill."

THE above quotations, extracted from *Ardath* and from the autobiographical if unofficial description of Mavis Clair in *The Sorrows of Satan*, are well adapted to express the two extreme views concerning the merits and the demerits of the lady who, rightly or wrongly, certainly occupies the most conspicuous position among our English women-novelists. It is not surprising that such divergent views should be provoked by a character who, however simple she may be in her own personal psychology, is from the literary standpoint essentially complex.

In *The Romance of Two Worlds*, for instance, the firstfruits of her literary genius, the novelist's theory of the "Soul Germ" and her conception of the "Electric Principle of Christianity" running through the whole cosmology would seem unmistakably to foreshadow the Bergsonian theory of the *élan de vie*, while the subtly delineated character of the twentieth-century Chaldæan magician, Heliobas, "who never promises to effect a cure unless he sees that the person who comes to be cured has a certain connection with himself," bears a distinct analogy to the cabalistic mysticism of Mr. Aleister Crowley. On the other hand, that grim tragedy entitled *Ven-*

detta is in almost equal degrees reminiscent of the stark inexorableness of Æschylus, and of the human, all-too-human, humanity of Mr. Walter Melville. In *Ardath*, that "tale of beauty, of horror, and of extraordinary amours" (if we may quote from the authorised biography of our novelist), a subject-matter that might well have emanated from the pen of a Pierre Louÿs, is handled with the unimpeachable correctness of a Samuel Smiles. So, too, the great *Tendenzroman* "Wormwood" is a dexterous combination of the *macabre* phantasy of Mr. Ranger Gull and the ethical "uplift" of Mr. Guy Thorne. She is, moreover, an authoress who is keenly alive to the social problems of the day, treating in *Boy* and *The Mighty Atom* of the Wedekindian problem of the influence of free-thought on the mind of puberty (though it must be confessed that her solution of that exceedingly thorny problem is by no means identical with that of the slightly cynical author of *Spring's Awakening*), and handling in *The Murder of Delicia* the almost equally delicate subject of the modern *maquereau*.

While, too, Miss Corelli has enriched the literature of Anti-Semitism with such novel and crushing phrases as "Jew-speculator," "Jew-proprietor of a stock-jobbing newspaper," "the fat Jew-spider of several newspaper webs," her denunciation of certain phases of Continental Christianity as "the sickening and barbarous superstition everywhere offered as the representation of sublime Deity" indicates some cleavage between her own Protestant theology and that rigid Ultramontanism which would appear nowadays to be one of the essential qualifications for the really full-fledged Anti-Semite. And if at times with the thyrsus of her ecstatic style she is frequently the Juvenalian flagellant of that "brilliant fashionable dress-loving crowd of women who spend most

of their time in caring for their complexions and counting their lovers," her features exhibit not so much the sadic grin of the mænad as the seraphic loving-kindness of some mediæval saint dumped down by a caprice of a fantastic Providence amid all the howling welter of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While too such phrases as "retrospective and introspective repentance" show an almost Jamesian preciosity in the fine-drawn distinction between the repentance for the sins that have been already committed in the past and for those which are about to be committed in the future, and between the repentance which takes place within the four corners of the human soul, and that which occurs within some other sphere of psychological activity, our lady's entire lack, generally speaking, of all the affectations of our ultra-modern subtlety are more reminiscent of the downright horse-sense of President Roosevelt or the transparent but by no means necessarily shallow simplicity of such writers as Mrs. L. T. Meade, Mrs. Annie Swan, Mr. Charles Garvice, and Mr. William Le Queux.

It is then in view of the fundamentally complex problem constituted by Miss Corelli that, disregarding alike the convention of her admirers that she is above criticism, and the convention of her detractors that she is beneath it, we propose to examine our authoress with the maximum of seriousness at our command, and to await with sanguine interest the result of what from the point of view at any rate of the critic is so revolutionary a procedure. The contents of at any rate the majority of the volumes of Miss Corelli being necessarily familiar to all readers of culture, we propose to confine our analysis to a survey of the cardinal points in our lady's *Weltanschauung*. Strange though it may seem to "the

fashionable atheism of the day" (if we may quote one of our authoress's favourite and most persistent phrases), it is the religious instinct which supplies the key of the Corellian psychology. In this connection it is interesting to remember parenthetically the pretty anecdote of how when the future novelist, then quite a little girl, was rejoicing in the sobriquet of "The Rosebud," she would always have the nocturnal consciousness that angels were present in her bedroom, and that Dr. Mackay, the mid-Victorian littérateur who had adopted the child at the early age of three months, is reported to have made the gentle but not inapposite remark, "Never mind, Dearie! It is there, you may be sure, and if you behave just as if you saw it, you will certainly see it some day."

It was perhaps a few years later that the little girl dreamt of founding a new religious order, and that an education at a French convent left on her virgin soul that white cachet which even the corruptness of Edwardian society, "when the infidelity of wives is most unhappily becoming common—far too common for the peace and good repute of society," has signally failed to in any way pollute (if as a mere matter of grammatical conviviality we may venture to split an infinitive with our distinguished *consœur*). When, however, Miss Corelli attained the ripeness of complete womanhood, the voice of the angels would appear to have whispered in her ear the great injunction "to leave the world a little better than she found it," and the sacred odour of her exceedingly important mission is to be detected practically in every work that has issued from her pen. Holding, like Torquemada, Mr. Torrie, Attila, Loyola, and the late Dr. Elijah Dowie and many other great religious enthusiasts of all epochs, that conversion is the most efficient method of spiritual improvement,

she concentrates her fire with especial vehemence on the "women-atheists, who had voluntarily crushed out the sweetness of the sex within them, the unnatural product of an unnatural age," who have "as haughty a scorn of Christ and His teaching as any unbelieving Jew," and on "the common boor who, reading his penny Radical paper, thinks he can dispense with God and talks of the carpenter's son of Judæa with the same easy flippancy and scant reverence as his companion in sin."

Thus it comes that Miss Corelli, with her full share of that intolerance which is the classical concomitant of all true religion, would close the harbour of England to the exiled Jesuits of France, and exclude the Jews from their prominent position in contemporary society and finance. So far from shedding a single tear over the tragic death of Zola, she gloats with righteous gusto over his asphyxiation, which she ascribes to a specific piece of theological revengefulness on the part of an orthodox and insulted Providence. At times her strictures come nearer home, and more frequently perhaps than any other woman-novelist of the day does she castigate those Episcopalian clergymen who indulge in the mental and physical enjoyment of illicit sex in wilful disregard of the most fundamental elements of their professional etiquette, "the vicious and worldly clerical bon-vivants . . . talking society scandal with as much easy glibness as any dissolute lay decadent that ever cozened another man's wife away from honour in the tricky disguise of a soul." In *Thelma*, for instance, the lascivious minister of Christ intent on compassing the almost compulsory seduction of the prettiest of his own parishioners, while his "conscience was enveloped in a moral leather casing of hypocrisy and arrogance," is a piece of characterisation which in its own

particular line of vice forms a fitting analogue to the monstrous clergyman in Mrs. Voynich's *Jack Raymond.*

So far, moreover, as the nuances of dogma are concerned our teacher takes the delicate and middle course, being as deeply shocked by the ritualistic excesses of the High Church as by what Mr. G. K. Chesterton has epigrammatically described as the "tea-leaves of Nonconformity." In fact her theology may perhaps be crystallised in the following formula, which however difficult in actual practice is from the stylistic standpoint of perfect simplicity:

"Why should we be followers of Luther, Wesley, or any other human teacher or preacher when all that is necessary is that we should be followers of Christ?"

But Miss Corelli is no credulous bigot. She is as sceptical of the historical trustworthiness of part of the initial chapters of Genesis as Colonel Ingersoll, Mr. G. W. Foote, or Mr. Horatio Bottomley. Let us quote from *Free Opinions* the following eloquent parenthesis: "A legend, which, like that of the Tree of Good and Evil itself requires stronger confirmation than history as yet witnesseth, which, by the way, was evidently invented by man himself for his own convenience."

Let us, however, now turn from Miss Corelli's solitary excursion into the sphere of the Higher Criticism to some brief survey of her more positive and constructive philosophy.

The Corellian cosmology is most fully expounded in *The Romance of Two Worlds.* This novel is the story of a young girl who, sick in body and mind, visits the Continent. She makes the acquaintance of a Chaldæan *mage* of magnetic personality called Heliobas. Heliobas, realising at the first sight of the young girl "that her state of health precludes her from the enjoyment of life natural to her sex and age," gives her to drink of some rare and special potion with the result that

her soul, dissociated for the time being from her body, takes a flying trip through space and purgatory, and the lady awakens to a more complete spiritual harmony. In this book the authoress's individual theories of the Soul Germ and the Electric Circle are expressed in voluminous digressions and dialogues whose inexhaustible opulence might well be called a Platonic Dialectic brought up to the date of nineteenth-century science.

This fusion of science and mysticism, which at first sight seem as far apart as the poles or the sexes, into a harmonious if heterogeneous unity, can also be traced in the Corellian physiology. Thus in *Thelma* we meet the unfortunate creature Sigurd, "an infant abortion, the evil fruit of an evil deed," destined to so tragic and well-described a death, while in *Temporal Power* we are confronted with the strange character of Paul Zouche, "the human eccentricity, the result of an amour between a fiend and an angel."

In the sphere of ethics, Miss Corelli is careful to avoid that misplaced originality which is so often the gaudy masquerade for a pallid and degenerate licentiousness. Our authoress finds sufficient both for her own personal requirements and the spiritual health of her reader in those good old maxims enshrined in the Bible, the *Family Herald*, and the copy-books of all self-respecting seminaries. Good is Good, she says, and Right is Right. We may note also the Corellian principle of the inevitable triumph of the hero or heroine and the inevitable damnation of the villain or villainess, a principle which bears a distinct affinity to the Jewish and Christian doctrines of Recompense, the Æschylean doctrine of *νέμεσις*, and the dramaturgy of the Transpontine Theatre. It may perhaps be urged by the ultra-modern critic that novels of the stamp of *Anne Veronica*, *The New Machiavelli*, or *Esther Waters*, where sin emerges from its slough, sometimes

in triumph, yet always in dignity and comfort, have a closer correspondence with the actual facts of our modern civilisation. But our authoress would no doubt confidently retort that it is the pious duty of the moral missionary to censor ruthlessly such pernicious intelligence, and that she is proud to prefer the higher if not always accepted truths of ethics to the lower and degrading truths of a sordid reality.

This sublime principle of Divine Justice is perhaps best exemplified in *Holy Orders*. In this extraordinary book, Jacqueline, the local prostitute of a picturesque English village, marries a man named Nordheim, "one of the smartest Jew-millionaires that ever played with the money-markets of the world." But the wages of sin, though for a few years a motor car and a Rockefellerian income, turn out in the long run to be death in a balloon in the illicit company of an aristocratic drunkard. For sheer psychology and for sheer English the following portrayal of the villain which represents the cream of two or three separate passages merits quotation.

"Claude Ferrers? Why, he is a famous aeronaut; a man who spends fabulous sums of money in the construction of balloons and aeroplanes and airships. He is the owner of a gorgeous steerable balloon in which all the pretty 'smart' women take trips with him for change of air. He is an atheist, a degenerate, and—one of the most popular 'Souls' in decadent English society—just to have a look at the fat smooth-faced sensualist and voluptuary whose reputation for shameless vice makes him the pride and joy of Upper-Ten Jezebels will help you along like a gale of wind. Claude Ferrers is a modern Heliogabalus in his very modern way, and by dint of learning a few salacious witticisms out of Molière and Baudelaire he almost persuades people to think him a wit and a poet."

In view, no doubt, of the high moral tendency of most of the comedies of Molière, who in *Tartuffe*, for instance, satirises hypocrisy almost as effectively, if with a less palpable directness than does Miss

Corelli herself, and in view of the essentially religious or at any rate mystical spirit that animates so many of the poems of the author of *Les Fleurs de Mal*, it must be reluctantly confessed that Miss Corelli is more impressive as a moralist and as a psychologist than as a woman of letters and an expert in French literature. It is possible, however, that this slight error may be explained by the fact that her acquaintance with these authors may only be second-hand, that she was involuntarily misled by the rhyme in the two names, and that her unimpeachable principles have debarred her from even hearing the names of such refined exponents of the Gallic spirit as M. Abel Hermant and M. Octave Mirabeau.

It is, of course, highly characteristic of our authoress's simplicity of vision that all her characters are either very, very, very good or very, very, very bad. Realising that complexity of temperament is but too frequently the mere euphemism for dissoluteness of life, she is content that her young heroes should be immaculate with all the immaculacy of the *jeune premier*, that her middle-aged heroes should be those strong silent men who have contributed so largely to make England what she is, and that her heroines should be all equally typical and equally sweet flowers of our English womanhood. Her villains invariably smile with all the depraved and diabolical cynicism of Drury Lane, and her villainesses are branded as degenerate super-women of intrigue and lust. And if the authoress by thus delineating her characters in the two primary colours of black and white thus denies herself the intellectual pleasure of minutely analysing some ultra-modern soul torn a myriad ways by unnumbered and unmentionable emotions, she has the consolation that she certainly points her moral with a more obvious precision.

The only character who in any way suffers from a complex temperament is Maryllia, the sweet-named heroine of *God's Good Man*. By nature as white and pure a specimen of Anglo-Saxon girlhood as ever spent to some good moral purpose her fragrance in the pages of the prettiest novelette, Maryllia is so corrupted by the fashionable whirl of smart society, "where without mincing matters it can be fairly stated that the aristocratic Jezebel is the fashionable woman of the hour, while the men vie with one another as to who shall best screen her from their amours with themselves," that she becomes addicted to the vice of smoking. God's Good Man, however, in the person of that high-minded clergyman the Rev. John Walden, has the courage to rebuke her at a dinner-party with an incivility which is, fortunately, more than counterbalanced by the fundamental kindness of his intention:

"I have always been under the impression that English ladies never smoke."

Maryllia, it is true, at first bridles at this essentially well-meant reprimand, only, however, to return finally repentant and converted to her prospective husband.

It is, consequently, not surprising to find that Miss Corelli's attitude to modern problems is one of a rugged and uncompromising conservatism. Thus she disapproves not merely of smoking but also of the bridge-party and the motor-car and of the *décolleté* dress which she so severely satirises in the phrase, "the brief shoulder-strap called by courtesy a sleeve which keeps her ladyship's bodice in place."

Consistently enough, also, in the sphere of philosophy she chaffs the agnostic dilettantism of Mr. Balfour with the most delicate of badinage: "His study of these volumes is almost as profound as that of Mr. Balfour must have been when writing *The Foundations of Belief*,"

and flicks with a deadly though gentle irony the "sort of cliquey reputation and public failure attending a certain novel entitled *Marius the Epicurean.*"

True Englishwoman that she is, Miss Corelli yields to none in her reverence for established institutions, and does not shrink from attacking boldly the complex questions of contemporary royal and political life. Thus, in the 600-page romance, *Temporal Power*, apparently disapproving of that democratic shuffling of the classes which is so marked a feature of our ultra-modern age, she treats with exquisite taste of the problems of the sinister Semitic capitalist, the intriguing politician who was once a manufacturer, and of the morganatic marriage of a sailor-prince.

For our authoress has at bottom a true respect for the social order of England. What though the monarch masquerade as an anarchist in *Temporal Power* and sign his name in the red letters of a woman's blood? Does not the repeated insistence on the title "Sir Philip," in referring to the virile and delectable hero of *Thelma*, show that it is less society *per se* than the abuses and perversions of society which constitute the target of the Corellian invective? Does not again the following passage show the bias of a soul which inclines with the sincerest sympathy to that innate munificence which forms the chief petal in the "fine flower" of the English gentry: "They got their overcoats from the officious Briggs, tipped him handsomely, and departed arm in arm?" Does not similarly such a phrase as "a dignified *grande dame* clad in richest black silk" show that most generous of loyalties which will not allow the true majesty of the aristocracy to be imperilled through the stinting of an extra adjective or the lack of a superlatively appropriate dress.

Unfortunately many passages in Miss Corelli's

novels may occasion her admirers some heart-searchings as to the reliability of her social psychology. In such a sentence, for instance, as "Why does an English earl marry a music-hall singer? Because he has seen her in tights," it would appear that the real heart of the matter is tactfully adumbrated rather than specifically described. When again that lecherous Jew, David Jost, the chief villain in *Temporal Power*, is sitting at home in his study a few minutes before midnight, after he had already "supped in private with two or three painted heroines of the footlights," does not our authoress attribute to the horrible Hebrew a capacity for concentrating an amount of pleasure into a brief period, more consistent with the powers of some hustling and record-breaking American than with the more protracted languors of the Oriental? Similarly, when she writes that "the public are getting sick of having the discarded mistresses of wealthy Semites put forward for their delectation in 'leading' histrionic parts," Miss Corelli is either inverting the more natural and logical order of events, or is attributing to such isolated members of the Jewish race as happen to be licentious a retrospective generosity in respect of past kindness which however gratifying to their co-religionists seems somewhat inconsistent with the general trend of her attitude.

The Corellian dialogue also frequently gives the psychologist food for thought. "O God" (cried impetuously the heroine of *Thelma* after she had listened virtuously to the illicit overtures of the villain, a "lascivious dandy and disciple of no creed and self-worship"), a magnificent glory of disdain flashing in her jewel-like eyes, "what thing is this that calls itself a man—this thief of honour—this pretended friend of me, the wife of the noblest gentleman in the land!"

Or take again so characteristic a specimen as the following:

"You will be made the subject for the coarse jests of witticisms at your expense—your dearest friends will tear your name to shreds—the newspapers will reek of your doings, and honest housemaids reading of your fall from your high estate will thank God that their souls and bodies are more clean than yours."

If, however, Miss Corelli disdains the more gramophonic accuracy of Mrs. Humphry Ward, she is none the less perfectly entitled to answer that her characters like those of Mr. G. Bernard Shaw, being something more than mere mechanical and objective copies of humanity, subserve the far higher function of being the mouthpieces of the subjective philosophy of their creator.

Our last quotation, however, brings us to the burning question of Miss Corelli's attitude towards the sexual problem. In this connection it will not be without its interest to draw some slight analogy between Miss Corelli and her equally distinguished if not equally popular sister-in-letters, Mrs. Elinor Glyn.

We would remark in the first place that the sexual problem clutches Miss Corelli hotly in its drastic grip. Her religious temperament may no doubt occasion a profound and genuine abhorrence for physical sin, but as was the case with the even more religious Tolstoi, or that strangely interesting character Elfrida (the ethical sexual reformer in Herr Frank Wedekind's *Totentanz*), her abhorrence merely supplies an added vehemence to the unflinching nature of her treatment and the drastic audacities of her missionary work, while the proud consciousness of her own personal virtue may conceivably entitle her to find at once a duty and a recompense in the sanguinary flagellation of her less immaculate sisters. Though, moreover, a moral teacher, Miss

Corelli is also a psychologist, and her aphorism "Men never fall in love with a woman's mind, only with her body," can be well compared for its bold but delicate cynicism with Mrs. Glyn's maxim, "Love is a purely physical emotion."

But Miss Corelli with all her unimpeachable correctness is by no means blind to the temperamental significance of a *grande passion*, though of course she does not specialise on this subject to the same extent as her distinguished colleague. It is none the less instructive to compare Miss Corelli's saving grace of a *grande passion*, "the one of those faithful passions which sometimes make the greatness of both man and woman concerned and adorn the pages of history with the brilliancy of deathless romance," with the following fine passage from Mrs. Glyn in which she admonishes those philistine readers "who have no eye to see God's world with the stars in it and to whom Three Weeks will be but the sensual record of a passion" with a dignified apologia for the life of her heroine—"Now some of you who read will think her death was just, in that she was not a moral woman, but others will hold with Paul that she was the noblest lady who ever wore a crown."

The latter quotation, however, brings us to an important distinction in the sexual ethics of our two novelists. For while Miss Corelli on the one hand is no respecter of persons and would be prepared to treat an "Upper-Ten Jezebel" or a "soiled dove of the town" (if we may borrow two typically Corellian phrases) with scrupulous impartiality according to their respective deserts, the novels of Mrs. Elinor Glyn constitute a valuable sexual hierarchy by which the degree of license to be enjoyed and condoned is in direct proportion to the social

rank of the lady or her paramour. Thus the continued adultery on the part of the Princess throughout a period of three weeks in the novel of that name is freed from any taint of offensiveness or indignity by the exalted rank of that royal personage who is decorated in this one book with several sets of stars. The ordinary untitled gentlewoman, however (if we except Agnes the lady in *Elizabeth's Visits to America*, who "had an affair with her chauffeur," and the Mildred in *Beyond the Rocks*, whose lovers, however, were "so well chosen and so thoroughly of the right sort"), though she may frequently infringe the spirit of the seventh commandment, is usually far too prudent to break the letter. Thus the romantic young wife in *Beyond the Rocks*, in spite of the assiduous attentions of an extremely fascinating peer, "an ordinary Englishman of the world who had lived and loved and seen many lands," succeeds by the most heroic self-control in preserving the technical chastity of a Prévostian *demi-vierge*. Note, however, by way of contrast the extremely wide margin which is allowed to the hale and energetic duchess: "Her path was strewn with lovers and protected by a proud and complacent husband who had realised early he never would be master of the situation and had preferred peace to open scandal. She was a woman of sixty and, report said, still had her lapses."

But the paramount importance of social etiquette in sexual relationship is most effectively illustrated in *His Hour*. This novel deals with the mutual physical passion between a barbaric and dissolute Russian prince and a typical and refined modern Englishwoman. Matters reach a crisis when the prince lures the lady by night to the sinister solitude of a deserted hut. "His splendid eyes blazed with the passion of a wild beast"; the lady faints, and when

she wakes up in the morning of course assumes that she has been ravished. Not unnaturally she is quite upset that she should have been the victim of such insulting behaviour, "she, a lady, a proud English lady." The commands of society, however, are inexorable in such matters and she consequently writes proposing marriage with dignified irony to that bestial nobleman, who had, according to her own theory, put her own status as a gentlewoman into such delicate jeopardy: "I consent—I have no choice —I consent. Yours truly, Tamara Lorane."

So far as mere erotic description and dialogue is concerned, there is very little to choose between our authoresses. The following passages are fair examples of Mrs. Glyn's conception of romantic love-making:

"Then, sweet Paul, I shall teach you many things, and among them I shall teach you how to LIVE."

* * * * * * *

"Beloved, beloved," he cried, "let us waste no more precious moments. I want you, I want you, my sweet."

* * * * * * *

"My darling one," the lady whispered in his ear, as she lay in his arms on the couch of roses, crushed deep and half-buried in their velvet leaves, "this is our soul's wedding, in life and in death they can never part us more."

* * * * * * *

If, however, we would make any distinction between the respective techniques of the two ladies, we would say that while Mrs. Glyn tends to exhibit the practical modernity of Mayfair or Continental society, Miss Corelli is at times more exotic and luxuriant, at times more explicit and direct, for blunt, plain woman that she is, she never even once dabbles in those mystic messages of the stars which Mrs. Glyn interprets with so facile and consummate a felicity. We search in vain, for instance, in the works of Mrs. Elinor Glyn for a passage like the following, which but for the pendent nominative might quite well have come out of the

Aphrodite of M. Pierre Louÿs or the *Mafarka le Futuriste* of M. Marinetti:

"This done, they rose and began to undo the fastenings of her golden domino-like garment; but either they were too slow, or the fair priestess was impatient, for she suddenly shook herself free of their hands, and loosening the gorgeous mantle herself from its jewelled clasps it fell slowly from her symmetrical form on the perfumed floor with a rustle as of fallen leaves."

Again, the delicious sachets of Mrs. Elinor Glyn's diction never somehow exhale such whiffs of unadulterated English as the following:

"With the seduction of your nude limbs and lying eyes you make fools, cowards, and beasts of men."

We may, perhaps, conclude this portion of our comparative analysis by suggesting for the erotic crest of Mrs. Elinor Glyn a Debrett and an Almanach de Gotha enveloped in a silk and scented "nightie"; for that of Miss Marie Corelli, a volume of the Self-and-Sex series lying open between a doffed domino and a crinoline.

It is also noticeable that while Miss Corelli, with whatever detail she may feel it her duty to portray their erotic sins, is always primarily concerned with her characters' ethical significance for good or for evil, Mrs. Glyn devotes herself more specifically to their physical qualifications. Miss Corelli's typical hero, for instance, is the Rev. John Walden, that middle-aged God's Good Man whose ripe dignity of manhood is subordinated to the description of his more spiritual qualities. Mrs. Glyn's typical hero is the Paul of *Three Weeks*, "a splendid young English animal of the best class."

We thus find that the space which Mrs. Elinor Glyn will devote to telling us that her heroine's skin "seemed good to eat," or that her hero had "fine lines" and "velvet eyelids," will be devoted by Miss Corelli to the description of the corresponding attributes of her hero or heroine's soul. Miss Corelli,

however, is by no means obtuse to the baleful effect on the spiritual life exercised by physical blandishments. She will thus explain the precocious corruption by senile perversity of a young girl in a remarkable passage whose stark realism certainly succeeds in portraying fully an important ethical and physiological truth:

"Old roués smelling of wine and tobacco were eager to take me on their knees and pinch my soft flesh;—they would press my innocent lips with their withered ones—withered and contaminated by the kisses of cocottes and soiled doves of the town."

As showing the comprehensive ultra-modernity of Miss Corelli's outlook on the sexual question, we would refer finally to her frequent allusions to "the unnatural and strutting embryos of a new sex which will be neither male nor female." Though, however, she is in one of her maxims apparently of opinion that "true beauty is sexless," we would infer from the following passages that she does not go so far as Péladan in ascribing an important ethical and sociological significance to this new type:

"Men's hearts are not enthralled or captured by a something appearing to be neither man nor woman. And there are a great many of these Somethings about just now. . . . Beauty remains intrinsically where it was first born and first admitted into the annals of Art and Literature. Its home is still in the Isles of Greece where burning Sappho loved and sang."

Returning, however, from Lesbos to Stratford-on-Avon, let us make some brief survey of Miss Corelli's style. To condense into a few phrases so delicate and baffling a phenomenon is difficult. At one moment her weighty nouns, guarded not infrequently by a triple escort of epithets, possess the pomp and luxuriance of the true Asiatic style, at another the brisk horsiness of her diction has all the spontaneous force of English as it is actually spoken. At times such passages as "A moisture as of tears glistened on the

silky fringe of his eyelids—his lips quivered—he had the look of a Narcissus regretfully bewailing his own perishable loveliness. On a swift impulse of affection Theos threw one arm round his neck in the fashion of a confiding schoolboy walking with his favourite companion. . . . Sah-lûma looked up with a pleased yet wondering glance. 'Thou hast a silvery and persuasive tongue,' he said gently," are reminiscent of the mellifluous cadences of *Dorian Gray*. Anon she will indulge in a vein of frank but militant simplicity that bears a greater resemblance to the style of Mr. Robert Blatchford, the celebrated atheist:

"A small private dinner-party at which the company are some six or eight persons at most is sometimes (though not by any means always) quite a pleasant affair; but a 'big' dinner in the 'big' sense of the word is generally the most painful and dismal of functions except to those for whom silent gorging and after-repletion are the essence of all mental and physical joys. I remember—and of a truth it would be impossible to forget—one of those dinners which took place one season at a very 'swagger' house—the house of a member of the old British nobility, whose ancestors and titles always excite a gentle flow of saliva in the mouths of snobs."

We would incidentally mention that Miss Corelli is above all a purist in her diction, and that she has registered her emphatic protest against the use of the expression "Little Mary," "a phrase which, although invented by Mr. J. M. Barrie, is not without considerable vulgarity and offence." Though, moreover, her language is on the whole essentially English, Miss Corelli by no means disdains the use of classical figures. For instance in the phrase "after-repletion" from our last quotation we meet an interesting survival of the Greek use of a preposition to qualify a noun. The occasional anacoluthon also (or lack of orthodox syntax) which is found in her works points to a by no means unprofitable study of Thucydides,

unless indeed it is simply in order to emphasize her lack of any literary snobbery that our authoress so frequently declines to curtsey to the affected rigidities of pedantic grammar. Her frequent use, again, of compound words such as "socially-popular," "brilliantly-appointed," "Jew-spider" betrays the distinct influence of the Teutonic idiom, while such a phrase as "braced with the golden shield of Courage" shows what unique results can be obtained by a metaphor simultaneously fashioned out of the defensive article of war of the ancient Spartan and the preservative article of attire of the modern European.

Finally, what is the real secret of Miss Corelli's success? It is that she is sincere and that she means well. Whether her invective rises to the lofty scorn of an Isaiah, a Mrs. Ormiston Chant, or a Juvenal, or whether the smooth current of her hate meanders along with all the tepid benevolence of a grandmotherly facetiousness, it is impossible to doubt her portentous sincerity. It is this quality which distinguishes her most effectively from the merely journalistic authors of the "big" serials. These ladies and gentlemen, it is true, effect their object and succeed in presenting the outlook on life of the typical man or woman in the typical street or alley. But their most brilliant productions but produce the effect of an intellectual *tour de force*, as though achieved in despite of the natural bias of their temperaments, by dint of a diligent study of the well-known Manual of Serialese. Miss Marie Corelli needs no such manual. Her *Weltanschauung*, broad, plain, simple, touched at once with a high consciousness of her ethical mission and a ruthless observation for all the sins and follies of the age, is the authentic and spontaneous outcome of her own unique psychology.

FRANK WEDEKIND

"Alike in the comedies and dream-plays too
You see but a domesticated Zoo,
Their blood so thin that in that hot-house air
They batten on a vegetable fare,
And revel chronically in chat and calls,
Sitting like our friends yonder in the stalls,
One's stomach of liqueurs will disapprove,
Another wonders if he really love,
Another hero starts with threats to pass
From this foul world to one perhaps more divine,
But through five mortal acts behold him whine,
Yet no kind friend supplies the *coup de grâce*,
But the real thing, the wild and beauteous beast,
I, ladies, only I provide that feast."

THESE lines, delivered by a lion-tamer in the due professional panoply of riding-coat, top-boots, and a revolver, are extracted from the prologue of Frank Wedekind's tragedy, *Die Erdgeist*, and illustrate efficiently the bizarre and Mephistophelian genius of a German dramatist alike in his qualities and his defects indisputably unique. Buccaneering no small way in front of the very left wing of the æsthetic movement, Wedekind is at once the *bête noire* of the reactionaries and the spoilt darling of the ultra-moderns. To his enemies he is a mere shoddy Anti-Christ, to his friends a dramatic Messiah leading back the inner circles of the chosen intellects into the promised land of vice and crime. It cannot be denied that his subject-matter gives considerable colour to both these theories. Life, as seen through the medium of his plays, is but a torrent of sex

foaming over the jagged rocks of crime and insanity. Take examples from his three most powerful plays. In *Die Erdgeist*, the theme of which is the baleful glamour of the "Evil Woman," three of the four acts are punctuated with almost complete regularity by a death; *Frühlingserwachen*, again, deals with hoydens and hobbledehoys, whose only occupation appears to be the creation, discussion, and destruction of life: In *Die Totentanz*, on the other hand, the scene is laid in a "private hotel" (if one may borrow the highly convenient euphemism of Mr. Shaw), while a charming interlude in lyrics is provided by one of the boarders and a temporary visitor, and the hero and proprietor is a "marquis," who psychologically is much more closely related to Hamlet than to Sir George Crofts. Add to this choice of subject-matter a violently impressionist technique and a hangman humour, whose grin is at its broadest amid the sharpest agonies of the victims, and one can form an approximately accurate idea of an author, conceivably somewhat poisonous to anæmic constitutions, but certainly both piquant and stimulating to the hardened and the adventurous. To arrive, however, at a correct appreciation of so monstrous a phenomenon, it will be advisable to investigate first the literary and social tendencies by which it has been produced, together with the character of the audience for whose edification it disports itself, and then by the light of such investigations to proceed to an analysis of his individual works.

For the ten or fifteen years following 1880, both the novel and the drama in Germany were transformed into a Zolaesque laboratory, where interesting human experiments were conducted by skilled operators with scientific precision. There were three chief causes for this: firstly, a healthy reaction against the colour-

less and conventional school which had held the stage for so many years, a school somewhat analogous to that of our own Mid-Victorians with their strong silent men and sweet insipid women; secondly, a dogmatic and uncompromising materialism was the creed of the most ambitious and efficient intellects who found their chief mental diet in Zola, Taine, Darwin, and Haeckel; thirdly, the abstract theory of the struggle for existence had received an excessively concrete exemplification in the Franco-German war and the colossal commercial impetus that followed in the wake of a united Germany. Naturalism, however, was destined by the very character of the nation to be but a passing phase. Even apart from the inevitable swing of the pendulum and the powerful Catholic and religious reaction, whose force is seen at a glance in the numerical majority of the Centrum, the German temperament is in its essence as romantic as the French is logical. The nation, moreover, being at bottom religious, "the death of God," to use the classic phrase of Nietzsche, left a most crying lacuna. The philosopher of the Superman adroitly filled the vacancy by the deification of Man. Human life became an end in itself embraced with the most poetic exaltation and pursued with all the zeal of religious martyrdom. The struggle for existence, ceasing to be a bare scientific formula, was metamorphosed into a classic arena in which the "life-artist" battled for the crown of his Dionysiac agonies, finding the most delicious music in the perpetual clash of brain with brain, and experiencing a sweetness in the very bitterness of the conflict.[1]

Crushed then by the force of these tendencies, pure realism died. *Die Ehre* and *Die Weber*, it is

[1] *Cf.* the lines of Ricarda Huch to life: "Denn du bist suss in deinen Bitternessen."

true, still hold the German stage, but in *Johannes* and in *Die Versunkene Glocke* respectively both Sudermann and Hauptmann have deserted to the Romantic camp, taking with them, however, a good proportion of the Realistic equipment. Particularly typical of this amalgamation of the two forces is *Hannele*, where the pathological and mystical explanations are to be accepted concurrently and not as alternatives, as in Mr. Henry James's *Turn of the Screw*. As was, however, only natural, there was a considerable reaction, and orthodox naturalism was deliberately flouted by the Secessionsbühne in 1899 with their penchant for fairy-dramas and their genuinely æsthetic project of stretching between the stage and the audience a veil of transparent gauze intended to draw the scene into a misty distance. The rankest idealism seemed for a time the order of the day. "All that the young and the moderns have fought against with such animosity between 1880 and 1890, pseudo-idealism, bookish dialogue, false and artificial characterisation, clap-trap stagecraft, all this celebrates in this drama a joyous resurrection; let us acknowledge it; we have lost the battle against falsehood and stupidity, conventionalism, and the public, lost it absolutely," writes Julius Hart in the *Tag* of 1902.

But the most interesting direction was given to this neo-romanticism by the æsthetic movement and *Kunstschwärmerei* which began to sweep over music, literature, painting, and the drama with an almost Nietzschean intensity. Pure realism and pure romanticism, then, both being extinct, and an agressive horde of exuberant and heretical artists being alive, the solution for the artistic problem was found in the æsthetic and romantic treatment of realistic themes. The prose of the human document became illuminated with the poesy of the human imagination.

Realism and Romanticism went into partnership in the freest of unions, and Wedekind is one of the most interesting fruits of this drastic alliance.

The realistic method might be worse than useless for æsthetic purposes, but the realistic stock-in-trade was invaluable material for spirits bursting with an almost morbid healthiness, spirits for whom no subject was too terrible, no sensation too violent. Let us, however, turn to the official pronouncement of Wedekind's preface to his revised and expurgated edition of *Die Büchse von Pandora*, in which he states his defence to the prosecution which the first edition of that interesting book had brought upon his martyred head: "Wedekind is an apostle of the modern movement. It is the motto of this movement to effect a transvaluation of æsthetic values in style and stage-craft. The followers of this movement have for over fifteen years repudiated the claims of the so-called 'æsthetic-content' and of mere formal beauty; they hold it permissible to depict artistically and to represent on the stage the ugly, the crude, the repulsive, and even the vulgar, provided always that such characteristics are not treated as ends in themselves—that is to say, when the work is not created by love of the abhorrent for its own sake but is merely the medium for the expression of an artistic idea. Wedekind, accordingly, as the disciple of these authors, chooses to shed a light upon the darkest crannies of vice, and in particular to surround with a poetic framework those sexual subjects which have been the peculiar subject of medical science. The end and goal of his writings is to awaken fear and pity."

Such an apologia can scarcely be said to be superfluous when one of the sub-plots of the play in question deals with the heroic, if somewhat nauseat-

ing, rebellion of a woman in the determination of whose lot nature has made a somewhat unfortunate mistake.

Before, however, we proceed to gaze upon the black and lurid pictures of our dramatic artist, it is advisable to turn very briefly to the audience for whose particular benefit they exercise their hellish fascination. Wedekind's audience, in a word, is the extreme left wing. The German left wing, however, is considerably more numerous, more advanced, and more dangerous than the English. Our own æsthetic movement was killed almost instantaneously by the Wilde débâcle. We still, of course, have our ultra-modern movement, such as it is, but for practical purposes no one could be more amiable or innocuous than the ladies and gentlemen who used to constitute the highly respectable audiences of the Court Theatre, or who find in the Stage Society a mildly audacious means of spending their Sabbath evenings. Germany, however, with its vastly superior education, and its horde of professional men and women, schoolmasters and piano-mistresses, lawyers, doctors, poets, and littérateurs, has the disease of modernity with a vengeance, carrying through each symptom to its logical conclusion with a violence and intensity to which our own fluttering unconventionalism affords but the faintest and most shadowy parallel. Free-love, which, with the possible exception of a certain ephemeral incident successfully immortalised in three or four recent novels, is in England little more than a name, the mythical bogey with which the halfpenny press pretend to frighten their delighted readers, or is at best among the smart and the semi-educated rich the philosophic sanction for highly unphilosophic impulses, is in Germany a theoretic dogma almost as sacred as that of woman suffrage

and demanding almost as devout sacrifices on the shrine of its philosophic altar. When again the subtle souls of Great Britain will so far break the ice of their insular reserve as to discourse about the tragedy of existence, the far more heroic spirits of German modernity will have recourse to all the æsthetic delights of a fine and artistic suicide, which indeed in the most advanced circles is almost a fashionable analogue to our own appendicitis, or will find in the modern dogma of "living their own life" the substantial though possibly slightly less exhausting equivalent to our English hunger-strike. How strong is the neo-æsthetic movement may be gauged by the phenomenal success in Berlin of *Salome* and *Monna Vanna*, the great scenes of which were followed avidly by young girls with an enthusiasm which was more than æsthetic. It may also be mentioned incidentally that Wilde's *De Profundis* was published in German before it appeared in England, a circumstance due quite as much to a keener intellectual enthusiasm as to superior commercial enterprise.

Realising, then, that while it is orthodox in England to be ashamed of one's passions and emotions, the German ambition is to plume oneself on taking everything *au grand sérieux*, let us turn to a consideration of those plays in which, on a large canvas and in big bold splashes reminiscent of the not unanalogous methods of the Secessionist painters, Wedekind is pleased to present framed in gigantic irony:

> "Les immondes chacals, les panthères, les lices,
> Les singes, les scorpions, les vautours, les serpents,
> Les monstres glapissants, hurlants, grognants, rampants,
> Dans la ménagerie infâme de nos vices."

It will, perhaps, be well to start with that little masterpiece of a dramatic caricature, *Der Kämmer-*

sanger. A fashionable singer, having completed his engagements in a provincial town, is snatching at last a few minutes' well-earned repose prior to catching his train. He has given strict orders that he is at home to no one. But there is no repose for the famed. An English school miss, who has waited two hours in the rain, smuggles herself into the room: she prattles her enthusiasm with pretty infantile gush: a few deft words of paternal advice and she is summarily dismissed. But again the great man's seclusion is desecrated by the entrance of a brother artist, a pathetically grotesque figure of a megalomaniac failure whose publisher complains that he spoils his one chance of success by refusing to die and thus afford an opportunity for posthumous discovery. But the genial tolerance of the illustrious one is considerably harshened when his colleague insists on playing his own compositions in a scene every whit as racy and delightful as the classic episode in Wycherley's *Plain Dealer*, where Major Oldfox, having tied down the Widow Blackacre, discharges at her helpless person the most deadly poetical fusillade. Exit, however, the composer, after an interesting philosophic lecture by his victim on the singer's life and of the contempt which as a practical man (for at an early period in his career he was "in carpets") he has for his fashionable bourgeois audience for whom he is a mere article of luxury as much in request as a motor-car or a new dress. Then, as the climax of this crescendo of invaders, enter Helene: a formal invitation to elope: the artist, however, has his contracts to fulfil and his train to catch, and the favour is declined with thanks: tears and threats of suicide: he endeavours to pacify her, and she promises to be good: he will miss his train if he is not quick. The romantic woman, how-

ever, unable to bear the final parting, shoots herself on the spot. The remorseful lover follows her example? Not a bit of it. He is politely regretful for the contretemps, but after all business is business, and he must catch his train. It is impossible without copious quotations to give a full idea of the piquant irony with which the comedy is salted; the truth and reality of the theme stand out all the more brilliant from their garb of romantic travesty, while the superb impudence of utilising death as an essentially comic climax is without parallel in European literature.

Let us, however, now turn from light comedy to serious tragedy in the shape of *Der Totentanz*. The scene, as already mentioned, is laid in a "private hotel." Where Shaw, however, sees but the problem, Wedekind has only eyes for the poetry. To Shaw the irony is a weapon, to Wedekind an end in itself. Elfrida, a young lady in Reformkleid, one of the most militant members of a suppression society, interviews the proprietor, the Marquis Casti Piani, on the subject of a former maid of hers, for whom she has been searching for some years. The girl is identified, and the whole question philosophically discussed. The proprietor, moreover, who is an extremely well-dressed gentleman with a first-class education, polished manners, and all the introspective subtlety of the most modern of decadents, neatly turns the tables by announcing that the real impetus which made the girl change her calling was the "suppression literature" which the puritanical young woman had with unpardonable carelessness left lying about. The ice being thus broken, he proceeds in his capacity of sexual expert to diagnose the respective psychologies of his *tête-à-tête* and himself. Why, they are both tarred with the same brush. If he, the trafficker,

pursues his unpopular vocation even more as a matter of sexual mania than of commercial enterprise, so does she, the philanthropist, ply her good work out of an equally morbid craving to move in a congenial atmosphere. Are they not both but the obverse and reverse of the same medal? Paradoxical and super-Shavian dissertations on the theory of woman are then followed by blandishments and caresses, in respect of which with a marvellous genius for brutality he chaffs her on the crudity and inexperience of her technique. Then comes the most *outré* scene of the play when Casti Piani and Elfrida watch from behind a screen the courtship of Lisiska, the missing servant-girl, by a young man in a check knickerbocker suit; the bizarre paradox is but accentuated by the swing and beauty of the lyrics in which this wooing is conducted, and the distorted idealism of the girl, who, as the martyr-priestess of the *joie de vivre*, is almost genuinely convinced of the sanctity of her mission. The interlude over, the audience come from behind the curtain. Stung to the wildest pitch of emulation, the extreme limit of self-sacrificing ecstasy, the neurotic woman completes the cycle of her psychic revolution by the supplication, "Verkaufen Sie mich." The marquis, who has thus succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations, in a fit of nervous revulsion shoots himself before the girl's eyes. Three of the inmates rush from three distinct doors, and the over-civilised satyr expires with their kisses on his lips, kisses savoured and criticised with all the frenzy of the moribund connoisseur—"Küsse mich—nein, das war nicht—Küsse—küsse mich anders."

It is impossible to express more cogently the whole tragedy of the dying sensualist.

No normal Englishman can be expected to enjoy such a play; in justice, however, to the author, this

freny is æsthetic as well as sexual. New worlds, in fact, have been needed to regale the insatiate appetites of the dramatist and his hearers; "Heaven has been blown to pieces by the artillery of science; earth is cold, stale and unpalatable; perforce let us batten on the fires of hell," would run his motto. As Baudelaire in verse, and Beardsley in painting, found their theme in the vicious and the abhorrent, so does Wedekind in the drama. As an ordinary play, *Der Totentanz* falls outside judgment; as a sheer literary curiosity, a dramatic fantasia on the sex-motif, a deliberate essay in the art of the ironical and the brutal, the piece achieves its own and peculiar ambition.

Die Junge Welt, on the other hand, flows in a current which, in spite of the eventual madness of the principal male character, is limpid and playful by comparison with the Phlegethontian course of the *Totentanz*. The theme of the comedy is the woman movement. In the prologue, one of his most aery and delicious pieces of work, Wedekind shows us a bevy of schoolgirls at lessons, chattering, fooling, and "ragging" their master with the most delightful *naïveté*. They have a pretty taste in literature, forsooth, reading surreptitious copies of *The Arabian Nights*, talking gravely of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, and quoting with the prettiest of pedantry Schiller, Goethe, and even Ovid. No mere prattlers, however. Glorying in their grievance, they found a league, the solemn oath of whose members is never to marry until the most glaring outrages in the education of the young are remedied. Towards the end of the scene some youthful figures of the opposite sex enter. How long will the league last?

Then we come to the actual play where the sacred circle has been already cut by a marriage of one of

the members. The whole comedy, in fact, shows how irresistibly the Life Force claims its own. The brisk racy dialogue and the satiric character drawing of the ultra-moderns are equally delicious. Particularly charming are Anna, masking the temperament of her Shavian namesake beneath the pose of the new woman ; Karl, the picturesque scamp, who has married a seamstress on abstract socialistic principles ; and Meyer, the modern poet, who, when his fiancée presents herself to recite a poem which he has written, in the most faithful of Cupid costumes, is most righteously indignant because—the dress fails to harmonise with the subtle spirit of his masterpiece.

A masterly little piece of irony, again, is the celebrated stage-direction, when, at the climax of an intense passage, a baby squalls, and is carried off the stage by its mother, to the accompaniment of music. Perhaps, however, the deftest touch of satire is the analysis of the decline of the *détraqué littérateur*, accustomed to transcribe each kiss fresh from the lips of his beloved into his artistic note-book.—"When I made my psychological studies on Anna, then Anna becomes unnatural—on some other specimen — she became jealous — there was no other alternative but to make them on myself."

Wedekind's dramatic masterpieces, however, are *Die Erdgeist* and *Frühlingserwachen*, which merit, consequently, a somewhat more detailed analysis. *Die Erdgeist*, as has been already remarked, deals with the theme of the modern Lilith, not from the point of view of orthodox dramatic technique like Mr. Pinero, not scientifically like Zola, but æsthetically. No show of esoteric detail, no orthodox *dénouement;* simply atmosphere. The play, together with its sequel, *Die Büchse von Pandora*, constitutes the epic of the courtesan. In the first act, Schwarz, a painter, is at work

on the portrait, in pierrot costume, of the wife of a Dr. Goll, a lady rejoicing in the various Christian names of Nellie, Eva, and Lulu. A middle-aged journalist, named Schön, who is in the studio, is on old and friendly terms with Frau Goll. The fact that female beauty is the *raison d'être* of the creature's existence is soon made apparent by the following dialogue:

LULU. Here I am.
SCHÖN. Splendid.
LULU. Well?
SCHÖN. You put the wildest imagination to the blush.
LULU. Do you find me nice?
SCHÖN. You're a picture that makes artists despair.

The pompous conventionalism of the doctor is seen almost immediately, when he suggests with heavy gravity that she is not wearing her costume with sufficient reserve. The artist proceeds to work, and the mere mechanism of posing brings out at once the sheer sexuality of the animal which he is painting. Goll is carried off by Schön, and the artist and the pierrot are left alone. The young painter proves more attractive than the old professor, who arrives towards the climax of a wild scene. In the scuffle, Goll is killed. Death, however, is a pet theme of Wedekind, who proceeds to batten thereon with abnormal gusto.

SCHWARZ. The doctor is bound to be here in a minute.
LULU. Doctoring won't help him.
SCHWARZ. Still, in a case like this, one does what one can.
LULU. He doesn't believe in doctors.
SCHWARZ. Won't you, at any rate, change?
LULU. Yes, at once.
SCHWARZ. Why are you waiting?
LULU. I say—
SCHWARZ. What?
LULU. Please close his eyes.
SCHWARZ. They are awful.
LULU. Nothing like as awful as you.

SCHWARZ. As I?
LULU. You're a depraved character.
SCHWARZ. Doesn't all this affect you?
LULU. Yes, I too am as well moved.
SCHWARZ. Then I ask you not to say anything.
LULU. You are moved as well.

Shocked by her comparative callousness, Schwarz subjects her to a catechism—does she believe in a Creator, a soul, or anything—only to find himself beating against an eternal "I don't know."

So ends the first act, and this creature, whose hair is a net of murder, whose lips are poisoned fruit, and whose eyes are pits of hell, has already one death to her credit.

The second act discloses Schwarz married to Lulu, and in the heyday of artistic fame and fortune. A fleeting light is cast on the swamp, from which the fiend has emerged, by the entry and departure of Schigolch, her old ragamuffin of a sire. Then follows a *tête-à-tête* between Lulu and Schön. Combining, as she does, the soul of an Ibsen woman with the body of a Phryne, she complains of her husband's obtusity: "He is not a child—he is commonplace—he has no education—he realises nothing—he realises neither me nor himself—he is blind, blind—he doesn't know me, but he loves me; that is an unbridgeable gulf." The painter returns, and is given by Schön the outlines of his wife's past. Schön had picked her out of the gutter at the age of twelve, and had had her educated; her antecedents were ghastly; after the death of Schön's wife, Lulu wished to marry him; to obviate that, he made her marry Dr. Goll with his half a million. Lulu is anxious to be good, but must be taken seriously. The painter then commits suicide, and the author feasts again on the carnage in a scene which, for sheer horror, challenges even *Macbeth*.

"After you," says Lulu, after they have heard the body fall, and Schön has opened the door.

SCHÖN. There's the end of my engagement. Ten minutes ago he lay here.[1]

. . . . . .

SCHÖN. That is your husband's blood.
LULU. It leaves no stain.
SCHÖN. Monster!
LULU. Of course you will marry me.

Then, by way of a really strong curtain, they send for a reporter, and dictate the official version of the thrilling story. The third act is the dressing-room of Lulu; she has gone on the music-hall stage as a barefoot dancer of classical measure; Schön, having temporarily freed himself from the spell, is about to marry a charming, "innocent child," whom he has brought to witness the spectacle. The insult stimulates the girl to a supernormal fascination. Having refused the proposals of a prince, she deliberately sets herself to cast her wand over the journalist. She mocks him brazenly, with her magic potency over him, in a scene of the most subtle cruelty.

SCHÖN. Don't look at me so shamelessly.
LULU. No one is keeping you here.

The Circæan witchery is complete, and the man, transformed, writes, at the dictation of the enchantress, a letter breaking off his engagement.

In the fourth act, nemesis is at hand. His marriage with Lulu shatters the constitution of the aging journalist, who falls a victim to persecution-mania. Lulu, though genuinely in love with him, surrenders herself almost mechanically to the kisses of his son. The journalist can stand no more—such a creature is not fit to live—she must commit suicide with the revolver which he produces. Simply as a matter of

[1] It is curious to notice that almost identical words were used in *Irene Wycherley*.

self-preservation, she turns the weapon against the man himself. Then ensues the most devilish scene of all. Fearing the prison-cage, the brute turns for help to the child of its prey: "I shot him because he wanted to shoot me. I loved no man in the world like I did him. Alwa, demand what you will. Look at me, Alwa; look at me, man, look at me."

Those anxious for the further history of Lulu should turn to the livid pages of *Die Büchse von Pandora*. There, in flaming characters, they will read of her imprisonment, of how, being deprived of a mirror, she at last found relief by seeing her reflection in a new spoon, of her rescue therefrom by her inamorata, the Countess Geschwitz, and of her flight to Paris with Alwa Schön; they will read of her life there among *souteneurs*, blackmailers, and millionaires, of her migration from Paris to London, of her degradation to the streets, and her final assassination at the hands of Jack the Ripper.

Wedekind, who to the *métier* of the artist joins that of the *enfant terrible*, strains in this play every nerve to shock. As the susceptibilities of the left wing of most of the English intellects are about on a par with those of the right wing of the German æsthetic movement, from our own point of view he more than overshoots the mark. None the less, the English reader, though stifled amid the fumes of the monstrous debauch, is forced to admire here and there passages of a potency truly infernal. The final scene in the wet and noisome garret is indisputably tragic, when the squalid thing gazes at Schwarz's pierrot picture of her dead beauty, only to throw it in revulsion out of the window, or where Alwa and Schigolch analyse the melancholy past.

ALWA. She should have been a Catherine of Russia.
SCHIGOLCH. That beast!

ALWA. Although her development was precocious, she once had the expression of a gay and healthy child of five years old. She was then only three years younger than I. In spite of her marvellous superiority to me in practical matters, she let me explain to her the meaning of *Tristan and Isolde*, and how fascinating she was when I read it to her and she grasped its meaning. From the little sister that felt herself like a schoolgirl in her first marriage, she became the wife of an unfortunate and hysterical artist; from being the wife of the artist, she became the wife of my late father; from being the wife of my father, she became my mistress; so flows the stream of the world. Who can swim against it?

So ends a play not without some resemblance to Hogarth's *Harlot's Progress*, if one can imagine the fanatical moralist treating such a subject with the artistic irony of a very much Germanised Aubrey Beardsley.

But Wedekind's most serious contribution to dramatic literature is to be found in *Frühlingserwachen*. The orthodox stage-conventions, it is true, are sweepingly ignored; the scene is changed with more than Shakespearean frequency; the characters indulge in prolonged romantic soliloquies; none the less, the night of genuine tragedy broods over the whole piece.

The first act opens with a conversation between Frau Bergman and her daughter Wendla. The girl is growing up, fit to wear longer dresses, and exhibiting the morbidity appropriate to her years. In the next scene we see schoolboys at talk; with intense gravity they travel from their work to religion, and from religion to sex, discussing the Platonic and American systems of education, remarking that Superstition is the Charybdis into which one flies out of the Scylla of religious mania, or comparing notes on the growth of their respective manhoods. Melchior, the leading spirit of the knot, promises to provide his less experienced friend, Moritz, with a written synopsis of the mechanism of life. In the third scene, we get the other side of the medal,

when a bevy of girls discuss life. How shall we dress our children? Which is it better to be—a girl, or a man? Then, again, the scene is filled with schoolboys, and we see the academic enthusiasm of young Germany.

"I've got my move," cried Melchior. "I've got my move—now the world can go to pot—if I hadn't got my move, I'd have shot myself." A British youth with his cricket or football "colours" fresh on his victorious head could not possibly have manifested a more sacred joy, and one thinks incidentally of the Viennese student who shot the professor who had ploughed him in his viva voce.

Scene V, after a short philosophic exposition by Melchior of the universality of egoism, contains an episode between himself and Wendla, when at her own request he hits and beats her, so that, forsooth, she may realise the sufferings of a friend of hers similarly handled by her parents. After we have paid a visit to Melchior's study, where Melchior and Moritz are reading *Faust* together, we are transported once again to the house of Wendla and her mother. This scene is the most pathetic in the first act. The old fairy tales about the stork cease to obtain credence, but the birthright of knowledge claimed by the child is refused by the mother.

"Why can't you tell me, Mother dear—see, I kneel at your feet and lay my head upon your lap—you put your skirt over my head and tell me, and tell me as if you were alone in the room. I promise not to move—I promise not to shriek."

Could the dim forebodings of innocence, the harrowing consciousness of mystery, be more poignantly delineated?

In the third act, events move apace. A poetic nemesis befalls the prudish mother, for the child surrenders all unwitting to the ardour of Melchior.

Spring has indeed awakened. Moritz, however, has been unsuccessful at school; he wanders into the forest to make the end. Four pages of soliloquy; a dramatic device, no doubt, but none the less indicative of the exaggerated introspective pedantry of the average German schoolboy. "I wander to the altar like the youth in old Etruria, whose death-rattle purchased deliverance for his brothers in the coming year." Then, when his thoughts are at their darkest, a pretty little artist's model comes tripping along barefoot; gay and sparkling is her careless life. "Come home with me." But the schoolboy has his lessons to do, and he hies himself to his final task. Act III.—Apprehensive of a suicide epidemic, the masters hold a meeting in which the question of whether the window shall be open or shut is apparently of as much importance as the expulsion of Melchior. Then comes the funeral of Moritz; the father repudiates the paternity of so prodigal a son, while the classical professor sapiently remarks, "If he had only learnt his history of Greek literature, he would have had no occasion to hang himself." Melchior, however, is still at large, and after a harrowing dialogue between his father and mother, is packed off to a reformatory.

But the transformation scene goes merrily on, and we behold first the reformatory, from which Melchior effects an escape, and then Wendla's sick-room. Amid the most trenchant satire on the pompous fashionable doctor, it becomes apparent that the child has brought home to her mother the full wages of innocence.

FRAU BERGMANN. You have a child.

WENDLA. But that is not possible, Mother. I am not married. Oh, Mother, why did you not tell me everything?

The finale of the play is laid in the churchyard, over whose wall there clambers the escaped Melchior;

he walks past the tombstone of Wendla, dead from her mother's heroic efforts to save her reputation; after an interview with Moritz, out for a nocturnal stroll, with his head tucked under his arm, he meets a mysterious stranger, who launches him in the world.

Such is a synopsis of a play produced in Germany amid the wildest acclamation and disparagement. Its success is largely due to the fact that it is pregnant with a problem which, in Germany, at any rate, is of peculiar moment. "Is such a subject capable of artistic treatment?" demands the man of the old school. If, however, the treatment is somewhat more drastic than in Longfellow's

> "Standing with reluctant feet
> Where the brook and river meet,"

the subject is the same, the reason for the difference being that German blood flows with a swifter current and a fuller volume than the thin New England trickle of the early nineteenth century. As a sheer piece of psychology, the work is as great as James's *The Awkward Age*, if one may compare a Vulcanic forge with a Dædalean web. That, indeed, the theme is unfit for tragic treatment, let those maintain whose ideally balanced temperaments have never experienced the throes and travails that attend the birth of manhood or womanhood.

Some reference should be made to Wedekind's less important works—to the somewhat inferior farce, *Der Liebestrank;* to the highly serious *So ist das Leben*, a work whose psychology and symbolism are analogous to Ibsen's *Volksfiend;* to the amusing, but not particularly significant *Marquis von Keith*, with its mixture of the problem, the extravaganza, and the character study, and its delightful comedy passage, when a boy wins his way with his father by blackmailing him with suicide; to *Minnehaha*, the prose-poem, compounded

of the spirits of the classics and the coulisses; to the satiric grotesque, *Oaha*, an elaborate skit on the celebrated Munich journal with its chronic confiscations by the police and its special "prison-editor"; and to *Hidalla*, that rollicking burlesque tragedy of Free Love and Eugenics. On a higher plane, however, are the volume of short stories, *Feuerwerk*, and the collection of poems entitled *Die Vier Jahrzeiten*. Like Guy de Maupassant, Wedekind treats only the one subject. His technique, however, is different, and while the Frenchman crowns each tale with a climax, the German clothes it with an atmosphere. *Feuerwerk*, moreover, is worth reading, if only for the style, with its noble simplicity and its majestic roll. The masterpiece of the series is *Der Greise Freier*, where, set in the background of an Italian honeymoon, lies painted the grey romance of a young girl realising her love in the very arms of death. Matchless, again, as a mock heroic *tour de force* is *Rabbi von Ezra*, a philosophic sermon by an aged Hebrew, delivered in the grandiose style of the prophets, on his comparative experiences with the wife of his bosom and the strange woman. The poems, also, are, with a few exceptions, innumerable variations of the eternal theme. With all its fantastic bizarrerie, reminiscent of Baudelaire, Poe, or Verlaine, the mood is throughout more masculine, not to say more brutal. No lover has yet set his enamoured features to a grin of such tigerish ferocity; no writer of songs has yet refined melodious lyrics with such Nietzschean gusto, such Satanic exultation. *Keuscheit*, in particular, is truly the apotheosis of the super-brutal. In a more normal vein, making quite a new departure in the art of light verse, is the charming poem beginning:

> "Ich habe meine Tante geschlachtet,
> Meine Tante war alt und schwach."

Of course it is inevitable that, like the Secessionist painters, seeking, as he does, such drastic effects by such drastic means, when he falls, he should fall with overwhelming heaviness. Occasionally, instead of being powerful, he is merely crude. At his best, however, his poems exhibit the swing and ripple of the authentic lyric. Typical of him at his best are *Heimweh* and *Der Blinde Knabe.* Yet now and again the cry of the sufferer pierces the cynic's mask.

> " Ich stehe schuldlos vor meinem Verstand,
> Und fuhle des Schicksals zermalmende Hand."

Among Wedekind's more recent works we would mention *Zensur* and *Schloss von Wetterstein* and, far more particularly, *Musik* and *Franziska.*

Zensur, with its sub-title *a Theodicy,* is an *apologia pro vitâ suâ,* arising more particularly out of the fact that the play, *Die Büchse von Pandora,* was actually censored even in Munich. The protagonist of this work, *Walter Buridan,* is without disguise Frank Wedekind, for the postulate of the Wedekindian personality, as a fundamental element in contemporary national culture, is as important in Germany as was some years ago the postulate of the Shavian personality in England. And, indeed, with all his clownings and buffooneries, Wedekind is frequently as serious as Mr. Shaw himself. It will therefore be appreciated that the passage which we are now going to quote out of the dialogue between Buridan and the Court official is meant deliberately, not as a mere piece of impudence but in all earnestness.

BURIDAN. But can you adduce anything out of my writings which hasn't for its ultimate object to glorify and represent artistically that eternal justice before which we all bend the knee with all humility?

Dr. PRANTL. What do you mean by eternal justice?

BURIDAN. I understand by eternal justice the same thing as

that which John the Evangelist called the Logos. I understand by it the same thing as that which the whole of Christendom worships as the Holy Ghost. In no one of my works have I put forward the good as bad or the bad as good. I have never falsified the consequences which accrue to a man as the result of his actions. I have simply portrayed those consequences in all their inexorable necessity.

In a somewhat different vein is the weird trilogy, *In Allen Satteln Gerecht* (*Ready for Everything*), *Mit Allen Hüden Gehetzt* (*Up to Everything*), and *In Allen Wassern Gewaschen*, which have been recently published together, under the title of *Schloss von Wetterstein*. In these three plays the lascivious and the intellectual, the monstrous and the real, the comic and the tragic, are linked together in a union which, though to some extent burlesque, is on the whole successful. The dialogue, in particular, in this hybrid of tragedy and extravaganza, with its ingenious twists, its lusty thwackings, its shrewd, violent thrusts, not merely home, but, as it were, right through the body, is in its own way packed with genius. Effie, in particular, with her insatiable appetite in the erotic sphere, is the greatest *enfant terrible* in the whole of modern European literature. And truly tragic is her dismay when she discovers that that *Unersättlichkeit in Liebe*, on which she has built her whole philosophy of life, is simply to be attributed to chronic indigestion, and that the instantaneous effect which she produces upon males is simply due to a diseased liver.

More serious, though with the usual Wedekindian sardonic undercurrent, is *Musik*. This play consists of four "pictures from the life of a young singing student, Klara Hühnerwadel, studying her art in the household of a professor who is married to another woman. Events take their normal course, but there is a great uproar owing to the arrest and trial of the woman, through whose illegal assistance Klara

had successfully escaped the natural corollary of her rash romanticism. Klara is consequently packed off across the frontier to avoid arrest herself. She returns, however, is duly arrested, and the second "picture" shows her in prison. In the third "picture," she is once more back at the professor's house, and once more does history repeat itself, though in this case the legal ordinances are not infringed. In the fourth "picture," Klara has given birth to a son, of whom she is devotedly fond. With true Wedekindian irony, however, the child dies on the stage. Such is the skeleton of the plot, squalid, though no doubt highly plausible. But the play must be read itself to appreciate the sheer force of its sinister realism. The characters in this piece are among the most convincing that ever walked the boards of a Wedekind play, painted too in colours far more sober than those fantastic luridities with which this author is accustomed to disport himself. It is, in fact, if we may draw a slightly startling analogy, a "slice of life" play of the Galsworthian genre. Before passing from *Musik*, we would like to quote the passage describing the child's death as typically characteristic of the author's brutal pathos.

ELSE. The bath will do him good (*with her bare arm in the water*)—it's all cooking salt—the salt won't hurt him, will it, doctor?

Dr. SCHWARZKOPF (*by the cot, dully*). There is nothing more to be done. The child is dead.

KLARA (*gives an agonised shriek*).

[*The* LANDLADY *picks up the tub of water from the floor and carries it out.*

In *Franziska* (1912), Wedekind has given fresh rein to his fantastic exuberance. This weird drama deals with the experiences of an ultra-modern Mademoiselle de Maupin, who, having sold herself to the devil in

the shape of an impresario, who holds her strictly to her bargain, proceeds to see life like a veritable twentieth-century female Faust. And life, forsooth, she sees with a vengeance, playing the smart "blood" in a gay *Weinstube;* marrying a rich heiress, so naïve and so unsophisticated as to put everything down to sheer frigidity on the part of her imagined husband; successfully masquerading in silk knee-breeches to a silly old monarch as a genuine spirit, only finally, like a contemporary

"In veterem Cæneus revoluta figuram,"

to subside both purified and enlightened by her kaleidoscopic experiences into the healthy bliss of the quasi-domestic life with a new, honest, and well-meaning lover.

The wild, rollicking humour of this play will perhaps appeal in vain to the more stolid of our English minds. Some help may perhaps be found for the due appreciation of this, and, indeed, of all Wedekind's plays, if it be borne in mind that for a modern woman to live her own life in Southern Germany (*sich auszuleben*, to employ the technical and official phrase) is not revolutionary but elementary, and is far more of a cliché than a new departure. Further, the play claims to be treated not by the standards of the ordinary drama, but as a problem farce, an Aristophanic modernity, a philosophic extravaganza, a dramatic anomaly, very much *sui generis*, and consequently requiring very special critical standards. Judging it by these standards, it is impossible not to be swept away by the high spirits of this strange piece of art. Who, too, can gainsay the practical up-to-dateness of a play where maidens insure against children, wives against infidelity, monarchs against madness? And who will not admire the almost morbid conscientiousness of

Franziska, who, having had one lover of the name of Veit, and another lover of the name of Ralph, and becoming subsequently a mother, determines, out of comprehensive precaution and sheer sense of fairness, to call the little boy by the impartial designation of Veitralph? It is, however, only fair to state, as we have already hinted, that the play finishes up on a note of genuine pathos and semi-conjugal affection.

What, then, is Wedekind's final claim? As a playwright in the ordinary sense of the word, his pretensions are negligible. One of the most marked features, however, of the last decade and a half has been the evolution of fresh species in the genus drama. Thus, apart from the drama or play of action, with its orthodox *dénouement* and climax, we have the "idea" play, as in Mr. Shaw; the "slice of life" play, as in Mr. Galsworthy; or the "æsthetic atmosphere" play, as in Maeterlinck. Whether we call such work drama, or quasi-drama, is as immaterial from the larger standpoint as the surname we choose to give to the individual who did, or who did not, write *Hamlet*. Even, however, with this extended classification, it is difficult to docket into any definite pigeon-hole so idiosyncratic a temperament. If we have to commit ourselves, we would say that the Wedekind play is the lyric play of irony—irony both comic and tragic. Even making all due allowances for defects, for the superfluous thickness with which sometimes he places his harsh and violent colours, or for occasional amorphous construction, as in *Frühlingserwachen*, as a master of irony he is indisputably a genius. No *sæva indignatio*, it is true, lends its ethical sanction, no Hellenic *εἰρωνεία* its delicate grace: it is for his own fiendish delectation that he plies his knout on that world of abnormalities called into existence for this express purpose, and writhing prettily in the most ingenious

of dances. Yet with what art and dexterity does he operate, finding with unerring aim the raw place of his victims, and drawing from these apparent grotesques the blood of genuine humanity. Your specialist will no doubt diagnose him a decadent, yet he is tense with a frenzied virility. It is, as we have said before, the very exuberance and violence of his energy that leads him plumb the abyss. He has himself well expressed his whole outlook on life, and indeed the whole Nietzschean standpoint, in the following lines:

"For them your kind and gracious face,
For me the sword smiles sweet,
For me the savage bear's embrace,
For them old Bruin's meat.
The brutal foe's own strife I choose,
They the humanities of truce."

ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

"My dear friend, as far as that grotesque realism is concerned, which considers it its duty to get along without stage management or prompter, that realism in which a fifth act frequently fails to be reached because a tile has fallen upon the hero's head in the second act—I am not interested. As for myself, I let the curtain go up when it begins to be amusing, and I let it go down at the moment which I consider fit."

IN these words, touched with a delicate flippancy which is thoroughly characteristic, Arthur Schnitzler endeavours to summarise that technique which, though it has lifted him to the summit of the Austrian drama, is as yet comparatively unknown to the English public, if one excepts the recent performance by the Stage Society of *The Green Cockatoo* and *Countess Mizzi*, and the production of *Anatol* at the Palace Music Hall.

It is, in fact, because Schnitzler's plays combining, and on the whole combining efficiently, the psychological interest of pure "problem" with the emotional interest of pure "drama," afford specimens of a type novel to, at any rate, the majority of our theatre-goers, that they provoke something more than a cursory examination, not only of themselves, but of the standpoint and method of the man who wrote them. Above all is this the case in a country like England, where the problem play is hampered by so many handicaps. The exaggerated officialdom of our English propriety, beneficial though it may be from the moral aspect, produces artistically unfortunate results. Many first-class problem plays are exiled from the stage, but that is not where the mis-

chief ends. Even when they are produced, it is only to be looked on with suspicion as eccentric symptoms of dangerous, not to say anarchistic tendencies. When, however, official and "respectable" dramatists (*i.e.* dramatists of the stamp of Mr. Pinero or of Mr. Sutro) produce so-called problem plays before official and "respectable" audiences (*i.e.* audiences of a calibre other than that of those who patronise the Little Theatre and Stage Society performances), it will be usually found (if, indeed, the play is not an innocuous family drama, or simply a comedy of intrigue, for in many cases the word "problem" has degenerated into a mere euphemism for some slight forgetfulness of the Seventh Commandment) that the dramatist has sacrificed the duty of working out his problems logically and artistically to the still more paramount duty of appeasing the moral consciousness of his audience.

Further, it is one of the precepts of our dramatic technique, most honoured in the observance, that the action should take place among people of high social position ; as, however, it so happens that it is rather among the more intellectual and introspective of the middle classes that genuine problems tend to arise, the scope of the dramatist becomes automatically narrowed. Of course we have our dramatic left wing, Mr. Shaw, Mr. Galsworthy, Mr. Barker, our ultra-modern exponents of the drama of ideas and the drama of psychology. But here, again, our revolutionaries overshoot the mark in their reaction from the orthodox. Mr. Shaw will bombard us with ideas till we can hardly stand. When, however, we have recovered our balance, we observe that, however indisputable may be his pre-eminence as a thaumaturgic apostle of a successfully dechristianised Christianity, his characters are marked by com-

paratively few traits of individual psychology, and participate in comparatively little dramatic action. It is, indeed, with profound appreciation of his weakness that "talking" is set by Mr. Shaw as a final seal on the *Superman*. Mr. Galsworthy and Mr. Barker, it is true, do give us not only elaborate discussion of social problems (though not infrequently an airy discussion of things in general is dragged in forcibly with no, or little, reference to the action of the play), but also refined and delicate delineations of individual character. But with the possible exception of the grandiose and monstrous *Waste* and the statuesque thesis and antithesis of the sociological *Strife*, their plays are not dramatic. To express it with almost childish implicity, their plays are not "exciting." With a few exceptions, they are charged with no atmosphere and abut at no climax.

Mere ideas, however, will not make the dramatic world go round, and mere psychology often only makes it go flat. Few words are mouthed with such fluent irresponsibility as "technique," but it may be said—and said, we think, truly, and without affectation —that no play can be a success without a certain minimum of "technique"; that is to say, either one continuous thread of dramatic interest on which successive acts are strung, or some particular arch-effect to which (especially if a one-acter) the whole play abuts, and to the atmosphere of which all the elements are harmoniously toned.

The vice of the English drama, then, is this: plays of good technical mechanism possess little or no "problem" interest; plays of "problem" or psychological interest possess little or no technical mechanism.

Let us, consequently, glancing first at his plays, and perhaps later at those short stories which stand in the most intimate relation to his one-acters, ascer-

tain to what extent Schnitzler has solved successfully the great "problem of the problem."

Liebelei, which was produced first in 1895, is an excellent example both of Schnitzler's powers and of Schnitzler's limitations. The *motif* of the play is the problem of the refined middle-class girl, who stands, if we may borrow the terminology of popular melodrama, at the cross-roads. Which turning is it better for her to take—the right turning, or the wrong turning?

Fritz, a sentimental young Viennese student, is discussing in his rooms the affairs of his heart with the saner and more practical Theodor. Fritz is melancholy. He has been sustaining a grand passion for a married woman, but the looming shadow of the husband obsesses him. Are his nerves playing him tricks, or has the husband ascertained?

Theodor advises him to sail in shallower and less troubled waters. "You must go for your happiness where I did—and found it, too—where there are no great scenes, no dangers, and no tragic developments, where the first steps are not particularly hard and the last, again, are not painful, where one receives the first kiss with a smile and parts finally with the softest feeling."

Scruples are out of place on the principle, "Better myself than someone else, and the someone else is as inevitable as Fate."

Theodor, moreover, has not only prescribed the cure, but has ordered the medicine. Enter Mizzi, the actual "happiness" of Theodor, and Christine, the prospective "happiness" of Fritz. Mizzi the practical prepares supper, while the sweet *naïvete* of the genuinely unsophisticated Christine captivates the jaded soul of our *fin de siècle* romantic. There ensues a scene of the most delicate gaiety and camaraderie.

All is health and goodwill. Even Mizzi the prosaic shows her passion for the picturesque on learning that Fritz is in the Dragoons:

MIZZI. Are you in the yellow or the black?
FRITZ. I'm in the yellow.
MIZZI (*dreamily*). In the yellow.

Could there be a more subtle probing into the soul of the novelette-reading shopgirl?

Then, at the zenith of the feast, when glasses are clinking and souls are flowing, enter the skeleton. The company is packed into the next room, and Fritz is left to arrange a duel with the man whom he has wronged. Exit the skeleton, re-enter the revellers; yet the shadow of the looming death casts a gloom even over the unconscious minds of the others. The girls bid a gay farewell to the young men, but the aftermath of the old love is already poisoning the sweets of the new.

The next scene is in the lodgings of Christine on the eve of that duel of which the love-stricken girl is in blissful ignorance. Christine, *bien entendu*, in contradistinction to the casual and heart-whole Mizzi, is taking her love-affair with the maximum of seriousness. Katherine, a benevolent busybody of a neighbour, puts Weiring, the musician father of Christine, on his guard. Weiring, however, having been the uncomplaisant brother of his sister, is determined, on the strength of his experience, to be the complaisant father of his daughter.

WEIRING. I became, Heaven knows, proud, and gloried in my conduct—and then, little by little, the grey hairs came and the wrinkles, and one day went by another till her whole youth was gone—and gradually, so that one could scarcely notice it, the young girl became an old maid, and then I first began to suspect what I had really done.
KATHERINE. But, Herr Weiring . . .
WEIRING. I can see how she often used to sit with me in the

evening by this lamp in this room, with her silent smile, with a strange kind of devotion, as if she still wished to thank me for something, and I—the one thing I wanted most to do was to throw myself on my knees and ask for her forgiveness for guarding her so well from all dangers and from all happiness.

The act ends with a love-scene between Christine and Fritz, poignant in its irony. He is all-in-all to her, she is just something to him; but he goes off to fight a duel on account of another woman without so much as bidding her a real farewell.

In the third act the news of Fritz's death is broken to Christine, and here comes the most subtle and delicate touch of all. Poignant as is her grief at his death, her grief at the casual flippancy of his treatment is even more poignant. Our *fin de siècle* Ophelia rushes madly out of the house to commit suicide in the nearest brook, or perhaps more probably under the nearest train, to point the philosophic moral, "*À bas la grande passion! Vive l'Amourette!*"

The play, however, should be read or seen to obtain an adequate appreciation of the precision with which each character is drawn, the spontaneity with which the dialogue flows, and the lyric pathos with which the whole is invested. The limitations, such as they are, simply lie in the fact that each act is self-complete in itself. However good they may be, three consecutive one-acters never made a drama. To compare great things with low, each act of a drama, like each instalment of a *feuilleton*, should leave, as it were, the hanging tag of some vital interrogation. The dramatic banquet should not only regale the mind of the spectator during, but titillate it with the aftermath between the acts.

As we shall see later, when he comes to dramatise on the larger scale, Schnitzler not infrequently exhibits the defects of those very qualities which make him so supreme in the sphere of the one-acter.

In *Märchen* (the Fairy Tale), on the other hand, the problem is brought more officially into the foreground of the play, while each act is more closely connected with those which follow or precede it. Fedor Denner, a romantic young journalist (nearly all Schnitzler's young men are highly romantic), is in love with Fanny, a young actress on the threshold of theatrical success, and of those dangers which follow so closely in the wake of theatrical success. Fedor, moreover, is not only romantic, he is modern—ultra-modern. And so, in the inspiring atmosphere of Fanny's home circle, where the mother bustles about with the refreshments and the "good" piano-teacher of a sister discourses music for the edification of the journalists, painters, and students who frequent the house, he gives an impassioned little lecture on the "Fairy Tale of the Fallen Woman" and on the "washed-out views and dead-beat ideas" of which the fairy tale is composed. The little lecture, however, goes off just a little too successfully. In a climax, marvellous in its tacit concentration, Fanny takes an opportunity of kissing his hand. Fedor is revolted, however, by the revelation implied in this pathetic gratitude. He had contemplated marriage, but now——. For the time being he nurses in solitary misery all the pangs of retrospective jealousy. Then Fanny, unable to bear the separation, rushes headlong into his arms. Then comes the great act of the play. We are back once more in the house of Fanny's mother. The young actress, having scored a brilliant success on the Vienna stage, has been offered a splendid contract in St. Petersburg by Moritzki, the agent. If, however, she goes to St. Petersburg, she will have to face the pains and pleasures of life unsheltered by the respectability of a family. The problem is

acute. Fanny, however, places the Fate of her life on the knees of—Fedor. And Fedor shuffles and vacillates.

FANNY. Come, and you—what do you say yourself?
FEDOR. After you have received Herr Moritzki at the house you can scarcely seriously mean to refuse him.
FANNY. Herr Denner, I consider you an exceptionally shrewd man, I ask you for your advice.
FEDOR. Yes, I think . . . I would accept.
FANNY. Good! [*To* MORITZKI.] Herr Moritzki.

Woman-like, however, having signed the contract, she craves time to reconsider. Fedor looks at it again.

FANNY. Fedor—you gave me the contract back.
FEDOR. Well, yes.
FANNY. You should have torn it up, dear. Why didn't you do it?
FEDOR. You should not have signed it, Fanny.
FANNY. Fedor! It is unbearable—you're driving me out of my senses.
FEDOR. But you yourself don't quite know your own mind. There's something in you which craves for adventures.
FANNY. Fedor—if you would only put me to the test—I will do anything you want—only tell me.

And then, eventually, Fedor owns up.

FEDOR. Would I not still have to kiss away from your lips the kisses of other men?

And so Fanny forsakes the life of domesticity for the life of the actress.

The chief defect, however, in this play is that, in spite of all its dramatic compound of psychology, pathos, and problem, the problem is not fairly presented, in that Fanny, being of inferior social status to Fedor, the question of whether he shall marry her must inevitably be influenced by purely snobbish considerations. It is only when the woman is of equal, if not slightly superior, rank to the man that the real problem of her ante-nuptial chastity can be discussed with real sociological fairness.

In *Die Vermächtniss* (produced in Berlin in 1898), the problem which our dramatist has made the centre of his play is the relation to the family of the mistress and child of the dead son of the house. The dashing young cavalry officer is brought home fatally wounded from a fall from his horse. Realising his approaching death, he informs his parents of his responsibilities. Death raises the home circle to a pitch of more than ordinary humanity. In spite of their poignant jealousy at the existence of other affections and another home life, they send for their son's household, and accede to his dying request to incorporate it into the family.

Act II shows the mistress installed in the bosom of her lover's family. Modernity, however, though satisfying to the heroic pose, has its penalties. Our ultra-modern family finds itself confronted with social ostracism. Still, they love their grandchild, and the mother of the grandchild is the price that they must pay. But the grandchild dies. The semi-official daughter-in-law consequently becomes a somewhat unprofitable luxury, and in the final act is given her *congé*. Even more than in *Liebelei*, however, the claim to merit lies almost exclusively in the precision with which each successive phase of the problem is portrayed. As a series of family pictures, the play succeeds, and succeeds brilliantly; as a drama of continuous interest, it fails, and fails hopelessly.

The next play of Schnitzler is *The Veil of Beatrice*. This "tragedy of sensualism" has qualities too arresting to be lightly disregarded. The dramatist has forsaken his problems to portray how the fatal temperament of a young girl of the Italian Renaissance works out its own destruction.

In the first act, we are shown the garden of Filippo, a poet of Bologna, which is on the eve of being

plundered by the enemy. The heads on Bolognese shoulders are worth little purchase, and who leaves not the town to-night will never leave the town at all. The Duke invites Filippo to the palace to recite his poems. Filippo refuses, so that he may leave the city of doom with his beloved Beatrice, a daughter of the people. On learning, however, that Beatrice has dreamt of the Duke, he spurns her in an egoistic paroxysm of refined jealousy, typical in its subtlety more of the twentieth century than the Renaissance.

> "So much I give thee, more than thou canst dream,
> So much that to be worthy of my love,
> Loathing should fasten on thee at the thought
> This earth is trod by other men than I."

Beatrice leaves him with the vague intimation—

> "Feel I that without thee I cannot live
> And have desire for death, I come again
> To take thee with me."

In the second act, Beatrice is on the point of marrying her legitimate suitor, Vittorino, and escaping from the town, when the Duke appears and proposes to exercise the *jus ultimæ noctis*. Owing to the remonstrances of her brother Francesco, he generously offers to relinquish his intentions. Beatrice is bidden to go on her way, but stands riveted to the spot by a fatalistic impulse to realise her dream. And what is more, she insists on being the wife of the Duke. Her wish is granted. The nuptials are celebrated by a gigantic *fête* in the palace, whose doors are thrown open to rich and poor. Beatrice, however, with the placid *naïveté* of her will-less temperament, flies to Filippo.

> "What boots it,
> Were I this eve an empress to whom worlds
> Bowed, or the callat of a fool? For I
> Am with thee now to die by thine own side."

Filippo pretends to poison both her and himself, and on her discovering the ruse, commits suicide in earnest. Beatrice rushes back to the palace, but discovering that she has left behind that priceless veil which was the wedding-gift of her husband, leads back the Duke to the chamber of love and death. The living is confronted with the dead rival, and the indignant Francesco slays his sister.

The power of this tragedy, however, lies not so much in the actual plot or even in the marvellous delineation of Beatrice, gracefully and innocently childish in the very irresponsibility of her fated sin, as in the rich tints of the picture and the gorgeous frame in which the picture is set. All the multi-coloured elements of the Renaissance take their place in the vivid scheme—poets, sculptors, courtiers, courtesans, soldiers, and populace. Annihilation and vitality grow each more grandiose from their mutual juxtaposition, and the red blood of life flows but the quicker and the warmer beneath the black shadow of doom. Few more eloquent tragedies have been written on the great twin themes: "In the midst of life we are in death; in the midst of death we are in life."

Reverting back to prose, we come to *Der Einsame Weg* (*The Lonely Way*, 1903). If, however, the tendency to import the methods of the short story and the long novel were apparent in *Liebelei* and *Vermächtniss*, it is even more marked in this play. A son, finding a sire in the shape of the middle-aged lover of his now dead mother, repudiates the natural for the putative father; a neurotic and over-sexed young girl, finding that her lover, unknown to himself, is suffering from an incurable disease, dies by her own act. These are the two *motifs*, knit together by no shred of logical connection, which form the threads on which

the drama is hung. Yet, if here we have Schnitzler at his worst, the many excellences even of this play attest by implication the merits of Schnitzler at his best. The scene between father and son is a sheer masterpiece. How delicately does the father intimate that "mothers also have their destinies like other women." And how complete is his rejection.

JULIAN. It is now absolutely impossible for you to forget that you are my son.

FELIX. Your son—it is nothing but a word—it is a mere empty sound—I know it, but I don't realise it.

JULIAN. Felix!

FELIX. You are further away from me since I know it.

Interesting, again, is the Nietzschean sanction for intrigue: "One has the right to exploit to the completest extent all one's life with all the ecstasy and all the shame which is involved."

Far superior, however, to *Der Einsame Weg*, with its heavy Ibsenite atmosphere, is *Zwischenspiel* (1905), where that problem of the quadrangle, compared to which that of the triangle is from the more advanced standpoint but *vieux jeu*, is treated with the most delicate and biting raillery. Victor Amadeus, the pianist, and his wife Cecilie, the singer, love each other with as much genuine constancy as can be expected from normal persons of the artistic temperament. Victor Amadeus, however, philanders with a countess, and his wife with a prince. Mutual jealousy! Too civilised, however, to interfere by any display of primitive emotion with the sacred love of the new modernity, they grant each other, on general principles, *carte blanche*. And so, at the end of Act I, they separate for their mutual holiday. Henceforward the husband and wife are to be the most Platonic of comrades. The necessities of their professional engagements, however, bring about their meeting in

their old home. But the affair with the countess is dead, and the affair with the prince has apparently not yet matured. Then do Victor Amadeus and Cecilie forget the ultra-modern theories which they are bound in duty to exemplify, and only realise that they are man and woman. Bursting with his new humanity, Victor Amadeus begins in the third act to be quite jealous of the prince. His astonishment can consequently be imagined when his Serene Highness presents himself to ask the husband formally for the hand of the wife. On the situation being explained to him, the prince gracefully retires, gallant gentleman that he is. But the reunited pair cannot live happily ever after. Cecilie, it is true, had been faithful, but faithful, she explains, by the narrowest of margins. She cannot guarantee the future ; and does not history repeat itself ? True, they had loved each other, but what love can be proof against the theories of the newer sexual ethics ?

"If we had only before," says Cecilie, "shrieked into each other's faces our rage, our bitterness, our despair, instead of posing as superior people who never lost their heads, then we should have been true to ourselves—and that we never were."

And so that parting, taking place, as it does, when all barriers but their two selves have disappeared, rings down the curtain on this most brilliant of satires on the ultra-modern.

On almost as high a level is *Der Freiwild*, a piece which gains an added interest from the fact that it has not only been censored because an army officer is given a box on the ears, but that the actors on one occasion refused to play it till solemnly assured by the author that the apparent realism of the portrayal of the *procurer-impresario* was, after all, merely poetic licence. The play is a vehement satire on the duel.

In a scene marvellous in its ingenious stagecraft and airy atmosphere, we are shown the picturesque gardens of an Austrian pleasure resort. Close by is the local theatre, where musical comedy is performed for the entertainment of officers. One of the actresses, however, Anna, shocks all orthodox traditions by refusing to participate in that social life which, according to the manager, is the sacred duty of the efficient chorus girl. For Anna, Paul Rohring, an analytical painter, entertains feelings which are quixotic, and Karinksy, a heavy bully of a fire-eater, feelings typical of a less exalted Don. But the overtures of Karinsky are rebuffed ignominiously. Rohring cannot repress the smile of sarcastic triumph. The discomfited lady-killer, aspersing the name of Anna with an insolent *gaucherie*, has his ears boxed for his pains. The inevitable challenge is brought to Rohring by one Poldi, the complete exponent of punctilious aristocracy, the past-master in all the intricacies of the *duelli codex*, the super-gentleman. But Rohring, who is anxious to marry Anna and live a long and happy life, rejects the inevitable challenge. Genuine consternation on the part of Poldi, who explains that the unpurged shame of the box on the ears spells ruin to Karinski's military career. Poldi proposes a compromise—the solemn farce of a bloodless duel. Rohring, however, disdains playing dummy parts in solemn farces. It is all madness. It is in vain that the incarnation of military honour expostulates.

"For you it is madness, but others have grown up in this madness; what is madness to you is for others the very element in which they live."

Finally, Rohring is given to understand that, unless he flees, the outraged Karinski will shoot him at sight. But with a somewhat human perversity our heroic painter refuses to run away. An encounter *à l'Ameri-*

caine takes place in the gardens, but Rohring, drawing just a second too late, is shot dead. And now, as orthodox applause to the red-handed, cold-blooded murderer, comes from the mouth of Karinski's own friend in six words the indictment of the duel, irrevocably damning in the cold subtlety of its satire: "And now you have won back your honour."

If, however, in this play Schnitzler proved his ability to write a problem drama which should be something more than a mere series of isolated phases, we find again in his next play, *The Call of Life*, in spite of its many excellences, the old taint of the one-acter.

The *motif* of the play is the claim of the desire for life to ride rough-shod over all other claims. A beautiful daughter is wasting the best years of her life in the care of a querulous father, incurably ill, but never dying. The little garrison town is agog with the excitement of a newly declared war. This war, moreover, has a special interest, in that the local regiment, the Blue Cuirassiers, had in the last war, by ignominious flight, branded itself with shame. Though this episode took place over thirty years ago and none of the actual renegades are now in the regiment, the Blue Hussars, with that inflated idea of honour only found in Teutonic countries, resolve to purge the disgrace by dying gloriously in the front of the fray. Among the officers is Lieutenant Max, who has cast on Marie, the beautiful daughter, eyes of admiration. Irony, moreover, sharpens the situation when the bedridden father, who was once a member of the Blue Cuirassiers, explains he himself was responsible for the historic flight.

"What was the good of it? Who would have thanked me? They would have put me in a grave with a thousand others and piled the earth on top, and that would have been the end of it.

And I wouldn't have it. I wanted to live—to live like others. I wanted to have a wife and children and live. And so I rushed from the field ; and so it has happened that the young men whom I don't know are going to their death and that I still live on at seventy-nine and will survive them all—all—all."

The old soldier, however, is unduly sanguine as to the protraction of his life, for the same call of life which ordered him from the battle orders his daughter to pour poison into the water for which he now craves.

It is outside the purpose of this essay to argue the ethics of this precipitation of the inevitable. Suffice it that it constitutes a most efficient curtain—a curtain, however, so efficient that there seems no compelling necessity for a continuation of the play. A continuation, however, there is, and in the rooms of Max, which are visited at night by Marie, who ensconces herself behind a curtain. She sees the major's wife come to urge a vain prayer that he should desert the army and elope with her. They are discovered by the major, who, shooting the wife, spares the lover. It is, however, when the major leaves that we understand the intense hypertrophy of life evoked by imminent death. Marie, knowing all, yet presents herself. Max can only realise that his life has but a few remaining hours, and that these remaining hours stand now before him. Another curtain, strong, if slightly crude, yet followed by a third act, which is nothing but an epilogue.

This somewhat exaggerated scorn, however, of such of the more complicated effects of theatricalism as are manifested in the ingenious concatenation of the plot, or the representation of sensational incidents which have no justification but their own inherent dramatic force, fails absolutely to affect Schnitzler's position as a writer of one-act plays. Indeed, it is

his subordination of plot to atmosphere that constitutes in this sphere his paramount excellence. As, moreover, Mr. Henry James in his *Embarrassments and Terminations* wrote short stories independent in themselves yet harmonising with some permeating *motif*, so has Schnitzler in his *Anatol*, *Marionetten*, and *Lebendigen Stunden* given us symmetrical one-act sequences.

Let us deal first with the Anatol-Cyclus, a series of one-acters portraying the amoristic vicissitudes of a *fin de siècle* sentimentalist, flitting prettily from heart to heart, till he is eventually encompassed by the matrimonial net. Little action weighs down these delicate pieces. Anatol and the flame of the moment participate in a dialogue, or Anatol appeals to the worldly wisdom of his friend Max to rescue him from some dilemma in which he has been landed by his own weakness or his own folly. That is all. Yet each piece sheds a little more light upon the holy of holies of Anatol's heart, and illumines with equal clarity and colour the charm and individuality of each successive priestess of the temple. Though no doubt the chief effect of the cycle lies in its accumulative force, some idea of the general airiness and brilliance may perhaps be obtained by a short sketch of two of the most striking. In *The Question to Fate* Anatol confides to Max his anxiety. Does the flame of the moment burn true and for him alone? By hypnotism he proposes to extract from his unconscious love that answer which will make him either the happiest or the most miserable of mankind. Cora enters, and is duly soothed into a hypnotic trance. Anatol, however, insists on being left alone with her at this critical moment of his fate, so Max retires into the adjoining room. And now, when the helpless girl is ready to answer every question, and, what is more, to answer it with automatic

accuracy, and the book of truth lies ready in his trembling hand, the seeker of knowledge has not the courage to know. Waking her up with a kiss, he expresses complete reassurance to the re-entering Max. Cora, however, manifests a perhaps intelligible anxiety as to the nature of her answers.

In the *Farewell Supper*, the scene of which is laid in the *cabinet particulier* of a Viennese restaurant, Anatol describes to Max the ineffable woes of being on with the new love before he is off with the old. What a strain it is, moreover, to be compelled to eat two suppers every night! However, he and Anna (the old love) had at the initiation of their romance arranged to confide to each other the first symptom of approaching *ennui*. To-night at this supper he will tactfully intimate that she is no longer indispensable to his soul's happiness. He implores Max to stay as the helpful buffer in an inevitable scene. Enter Anna, fresh from the stage and hungry for oysters. The pangs of starvation temporarily appeased, Anna announces that she has something important to communicate. She has grown tired of Anatol and fallen in love with another. She hopes he will not mind, but better she should tell him now than when it was too late. Collapse of Max into uproarious laughter. With pique mingling with his relief, Anatol rises to the occasion, professing the righteous indignation of a wounded spirit. To vindicate his *armour-propre*, he contemptuously informs her that he too has fallen in love with another, but as far as he is concerned his confession does come too late. "Only a man could be so brutal," retorts Anna; "a woman would never be so tactless as to say anything so crude." And so the comedy ends with the girl carrying off the remains of the supper to her cavalier round the corner.

The whole cycle, however, should be read to

appreciate the racy ripple of the dialogue, the subtle malice of the characterisation, and the general verve and irony of these most sparkling of comedies.

Perhaps at this moment it may be convenient just to mention the audacious psychology of the super-Boccacian *Reigen*. English decorum, no doubt, forbids anything but the most casual allusion to this sequence of duologues, where all the members of the social hierarchy are linked together by participation in the same eternal plot.

Yet in its way, this book, written originally for a select circle and subsequently published by universal request, is one of the most refined feats of intellectualism which Schnitzler has ever performed. For the delicacy of the style is in inverse ratio to the delicacy of the subject-matter, and the various nuances of social technique are described and differentiated with the masterly touch of combined experience and intuition. Scarcely suited, no doubt, as a Sunday School prize, the book will, none the less, well repay perusal by modern men and women of the modern world.

The series *Marionetten*, to which allusion has already been made, has for its *motif* the ironic tragedy of those who essay to manipulate the lives of others. The best of three plays is *The Puppet-player*. To the happy fireside of Eduard and Anna there is introduced an old friend, George Merklin, whom the husband had casually encountered. Merklin is a picturesque, if battered, Bohemian who encircles himself somewhat showily with a halo of alleged mysticism. The whole art of the dramatist, however, in this little piece is devoted to creating an atmosphere of light melancholy, in which the poetic isolation of the second-rate genius, Merklin, stands in vivid contrast to the prosaic happiness of his less

gifted friend. The climax comes when it transpires that Merklin had loved Anna in the past and had brought the two together by way of a psychological experiment at a Bohemian supper.

"The little girl who was so nice to you simply did what I wished. You two were the puppets in my hand. I pulled the strings. It was arranged that she should pretend to be in love with you. For you always roused my sympathy, my dear Eduard; I wanted to awake in you the illusion of happiness, so that you should be ready for true happiness when you found it."

And so this shoddy superman goes out into this lonely world, having played with the fates of others only to have played away his own life's happiness.

Perhaps, however, Schnitzler's most characteristic series of one-acters is the one headed *Lebendige Stunden*. Life should be weighed as much by quality as by quantity. One man can traverse more life in a few seconds than another in whole years. It is typical, however, of Schnitzler's method that he essays not merely to lead up to a violent climax by artifices of calculated stagecraft, but to set the vivid hour in an harmonious and poetic frame. The most striking of the series is the extraordinary fantasia, *The Woman with the Dagger*.

Leonhardt, a seriously romantic youth, in apparently the full flush of his first grand passion, meets the wife of a dramatic author in the Renaissance saloon of a picture gallery. Pre-eminent among the pictures on the wall is that of a woman robed in white, holding a dagger in her uplifted hand, and gazing at the floor as if there lay someone whom she had murdered. It is then in this atmosphere that our gallant urges his suit to the unresponsive Pauline, who coolly informs him that she has confessed to her husband that she is in danger, and that they are travelling away to-morrow.

And then, as she is on the point of saying farewell, she stands before the picture.

PAULINE (*looking closer*). Who lies there in the shadow?
LEONHARDT. Where?
PAULINE. Do you not see?
LEONHARDT. I see nothing.
PAULINE. It is you.
LEONHARDT. I? Pauline, what an extraordinary jest!

And then, as they look and look, they fall into an hypnotic trance and the clock of the world goes back some five hundred years. Pauline has become Paola, and Leonhardt, Lionardo, while the racy Viennese idiom is turned to classical blank verse. It is early dawn in the studio of the Master Remigio, and Remigio is away on his travels. Lionardo arrogates the claims of love on the strength of the favours which he has just enjoyed. Paola spurns him as the mere mechanical toy of her passion. She loves and has always loved her husband. That this is no mere pose is apparent from the fact that on the sudden entrance of the husband she immediately elucidates the situation. Remigio, however, with a sublime tolerance, perhaps more typical of the husband in Mr. Shaw's *Irrational Knot* than of a hot-blooded Italian, pardons Paola on the general principles of twentieth-century philosophy. Lionardo, however, piqued and insulted as being regarded as

> "The glass, the poor mean glass
> From which a child drank a forbidden draught,
> The merest pitiful tool of a chance and fate,"

vows vengeance on Remigio. Paola anticipates this vengeance by killing Lionardo on the spot with a dagger, thus exemplifying the pose of the picture. Remigio rises to the occasion and seizes on this splendidly tragic attitude to complete an unfinished portrait of this loyalest of wives.

And then they awaken from their trance. But the magnet of destiny draws them inexorably. Pauline grants the assignation, with an air, however, of mystic fatality, which shows only too well with what precision the present must once again mirror the past.

But perhaps the most sustained and elaborated specimen of our author's method is the ironic tragedy of the French Revolution, *The Green Cockatoo*. The "Green Cockatoo" is an underground tavern where brilliant, if disreputable, actors give, for the edification of their aristocratic audiences, impromptu representations of crime and vice.

Henri, the star-man, moreover, has just married the actress Léocadie, not for the sake of paradox, but in all seriousness. When his turn comes, he rushes on to the stage shouting out that he found his wife, Léocadie, with her lover the duke, and killed her. Such a calamity being not apparently *primâ facie* improbable, even the manager is almost as alarmed as the audience, till he realises that the whole thing is but an histrionic *tour de force*. And then, as the play progresses, the atmosphere becomes more and more lurid with impending gloom. Jest and reality intermingle in the subtlest of ironies. It is part of the entertainment that the ragamuffins should lavish on their patrons the freest of insults. But is there not a paradox within the paradox, when one remembers that the Bastille has fallen that very day? The various types, moreover, of an aristocracy exhibiting the levity of people who are shortly going to be hanged are delightfully portrayed—the *viveur*, "for whom every day is lost in which he has not captured a woman or killed a man," the pretty young noble whose corrupt flirtation is so deftly adumbrated, and the lascivious *grande dame*, who, in spite of her

husband's anxiety, is very far from shocked at these spectacular novelties. And then Henri snaps up the truth from the demeanour of the manager and his colleagues. The Duke comes on to the stage and the actor then gives yet another representation of the avenging husband—and this time he surpasses himself, for he is but acting the truth.

Less sensational, but of equal psychological grimness, is the play *The Mate*, which is in the same series as the *Green Cockatoo*. The theme is the pathetic irony of the illusion of a middle-aged professor, who gives an almost paternal benediction to what he fondly imagines to be the grand passion of his young and temperamental wife. When, consequently, his wife dies suddenly, the husband is prepared quite honestly to condole with the lover, for after all has he not a right to be pitied even more than himself? When, therefore, he learns from his young colleague that he has just become engaged to another girl with whom he has been in love for some time his righteous indignation is unbounded.

"I would have raised you from the ground if you had been broken by grief. I would have gone with you to her grave, if the woman who is lying over there had been your love; but you have turned her into your wanton, and you have filled this house with lies and foulness right up to the roof till it makes me sick—and that's why—that's why, yes, that's why I'm going to kick you out."

But there is an anti-climax within an anti-climax, for the man learns from a mutual woman friend of the dead woman and of himself, that the imagined *grande passion* had been even from the standpoint of the lady nothing more or less than a miserable trumpery adventure.

Reverting now to Schnitzler's longer plays, some

mention should be made of *Komtesse Mizzi*, *Der Junge Medardus*, and, above all, *Das Weites Land*.

Komtesse Mizzi, entitled, appropriately enough, "A Family Day" is in form a one-acter, though of sufficient length and substance to have obtained separate publication. There is little, if any, action. The play is based on character, dialogue, and situation. Yet it possesses distinct psychological titillation in its presentation of a daughter who takes a filial interest in her father's "actress-mistress," and who is sensible enough, aristocrat though she is, to meet the lady herself with all friendliness, and chat with her as woman to woman without the slightest affectation. This feminine freemasonry, however, is perhaps explained by the fact that the countess herself has lived her own life, to such good effect that she is the mother of a grown-up boy by her father's best friend, Prince Egon. When, consequently, the prince introduces the boy as his own natural child by an unknown mother, the atmosphere becomes somewhat rare. At first highly irritated, she treats with frigid indifference the frank exuberant youth, who divines the truth with instinctive intuition, only, however, shortly afterwards to consent to marry the prince, and thus become the official stepmother of her own long-lost child. The racy worldly optimism of this play is particularly characteristic of the essentially benevolent malice of the Schnitzlerian cynicism.

Of a totally different order is *Der Junge Medardus*, a long play of historical patriotism, specially written for the respectable and official Burg Theater of Vienna. It might seem indeed at first sight that Schnitzler, the refined, ultra-modern analyst, would be somewhat out of his element amid all the blood and thunder of the Napoleonic campaigns, which *primâ*

facie offer but small scope for psychological subtleties. The *tour de force* consequently becomes all the more creditable when the author, in spite of all his trappings of patriotic melodrama, manages successfully to execute his own favourite tricks. The canvas on which this drama is portrayed is so vast as to render any synopsis necessarily inadequate. The idyll, however, and double suicide of the young French prince Franz and the bourgeois girl Agatha, is one of the purest and sweetest love episodes which Schnitzler has ever written. But it is Agatha's brother, the young, brave, and picturesque Medardus, who provides the most precious examples of recherché psychology. The suicide of the dead couple, Agatha and Franz, had been occasioned by the refusal of Franz's family to consent to the marriage. When, consequently, Franz's sister, Helene (a character somewhat analogous to Mathilde de la Môle in Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir*) wishes to put flowers on the graves of the dead pair, Medardus refuses to allow her. Helene has him challenged by her suitor, but Medardus emerges triumphantly from the duel. Anxious to carry the war into the enemy's camp, and to redress the balance of the family account, he succeeds, by the dashing conquest of the most perilous difficulties, in becoming the lover of Helene, with the eventual object of rousing the whole household and flaunting to her own family the haughty girl's dishonour. Helene, however, is erratic in her favours. Medardus, like Julien, is scorched by his own fire. The ending, moreover, of the play, though extremely effective theatrically, strikes us from the psychological standpoint as distinctly false. Helene and Medardus both plot to assassinate Napoleon. Hearing that Helene is Napoleon's mistress, Medardus kills her instead of Napoleon.

So far, so good. But when our quixotic hero, when offered a free pardon on the sole condition that he undertakes to make no further attempt against Napoleon's life, obstinately refuses to give the required word, one can only say that he is observing the etiquette neither of melodrama nor even of life, but solely of patriotic tragedy.

But of all the longer plays of Schnitzler, the best and most distinctive in that erotic "General Post" entitled *Das Weite Land* (The Wide Country). This drama, which is the only full-dress drawing-room comedy which Schnitzler has written, belongs to what we have already designated as the "slice of life" school. It depends for its convincingness neither on any particularly drastic situation nor on the disproportionate merit of any individual act. The author simply takes a group of representative modern people, rich, intellectual, and energetic, and shows the respective crossings and intertwinings of their various lives. The complexity of the intrigue is overwhelming, not to say bewildering, for practically every character, from the prolific Aigon to the virginal Erna, and from the active business man Friedrich to his polyandrous wife Genia, is subject to one or more erotic moods, with whose more or less simultaneous conjugation in the past, present, and future tenses the play specifically deals. Though, too, all the characters lead emotional lives, they deserve credit in that they none of them wear their souls upon their sleeves, or carry their temperaments in their pockets with the ostentatious affectation of those Sudermannic personages who never for a moment lose the consciousness that they are living in an atmosphere of "high problem." For the people with whom we have now to deal are so occupied with the concrete acts of their actual lives that they have little time to waste in mere airy gener-

alities. When consequently they do philosophise, shortly, crisply, and in the light of personal experience, they are for that very reason all the more convincing. The whole *motif* of this play, where the spirits of Congreve and Henry James seem to amalgamate in so strange but yet so harmonious a compound, is well crystallised in the following quotation: "Love and deception—faithfulness and unfaithfulness—adoration for one woman and desire for another woman or several others, yes, my good Hofreiter, the soul is a wide country."

As can be seen from these tolerant words, which have all the greater force in that the man who speaks them is at any rate temporarily more or less in love with his friend's wife, the mood in which the problem of promiscuity is treated is less one of indignant satire than of an ironic charity, which, while finding the complications at once comic and tragic, yet assigns to every phase of love from the kiss Friedrich gave to Erna three thousand metres above the sea, to Otto's nocturnal escalades of Genia's room, its own specific emotional value, even though the final verdict is to be found in the words of the middle-aged Friedrich, refusing to elope with the twenty-year-old Erna: "Everything's an illusion!"

From the point of view, also, of concentrated crispness of dialogue and characterisation, Schnitzler has never achieved anything better than this play. How telling in particular is the dialogue between the mutually unfaithful spouses, Genia and Friedrich. The husband is interrogating his wife about a young Russian virtuoso who had just blown out his brains.

GENIA. He was not my lover. I'm sorry to say he was not my lover. Is that enough for you!

Or take again the passage between Friedrich and

Genia after Friedrich has just fought a fatal duel with the twenty-five year old naval officer, Otto.

GENIA. But why? If you cared the least bit about me—if it had been a case of hate—if it had been jealousy—love—

FRED. No—I feel at any rate damned little of all that. But no man likes to be made an ass of.

In his new asexual play, *Professor Bernhardi*, Schnitzler strikes out an entirely new line, leaves that light, airy sphere which he had made so peculiarly his own, and embarks into the grim realms of pure problem. The play is an avowed and deliberate tract in the manner of Granville Barker, Galsworthy, or Brieux. Yet however devoid it may be of those qualities which one is accustomed to label Schnitzlerian, it is the most earnest, the most ethical, the most convincing of all his plays.

Put shortly, the piece deals with an "affaire Dreyfus" in the medical profession. Professor Bernhardi, a great Jewish doctor, has in the face of numerous obstacles succeeded in building up the prosperity of a new hospital, the Elisabethinum, treating mainly Catholic patients, but supported mainly by Jewish funds. A substantial percentage of the staff are Jewish, and it is instructive to observe how almost instinctively the Jews and Catholics range themselves into two camps. In the first act a Catholic girl is dying of septic poisoning as the result of some outside doctor's clumsy attempt to help her to escape the consequences of her own indiscretion. The patient herself, however, in a state of blissful delirium, confident of recovery, and expecting the speedy advent of her lover, is deriving the maximum of enjoyment out of the few minutes she has yet to live. Under these circumstances there arrives a Catholic priest, sent for, not by the girl but by a nurse, with the object of administering the last sacrament. Out of sheer

humanity and medical conscientiousness, Professor Bernhardi is reluctant to have his patient's last hours marred by the realisation of her death and the shattering of her happy dream. The Catholic priest is insistent. The Professor is politely firm. There is an animated dialogue in the course of which the Professor touches the priest very lightly on the shoulder, though there is nothing in the nature of an assault. In the meanwhile the patient dies comfortably. The Clerical and Anti-semitic parties exploit the incident with inaccurate though artistic journalistic embellishments. There is a tremendous uproar. The Governors of the hospital threaten to resign. Under pressure from his friends, the Professor is willing to tender, not indeed an abject apology, but a polite explanation. The Clerical party thereupon blackmail him by threatening to raise the question in Parliament, if he does not secure the election to a vacant post on the hospital staff of a Catholic candidate who is on the one hand the protégé of the cousin of their leader, and on the other hand incompetent. Refusing to be a party to the job, Bernhardi secures the election to the post of a man who is both competent and a Jew. Bernhardi, moreover, relies on the personal assurance of Flint, the Minister for Education and Public Worship, that he will help him by his support in Parliament. When, however, matters came to a head, Flint, scenting in the middle of his speech with the divine flair of the true politician the actual state of public opinion, throws Bernhardi to the wolves and himself suggests a prosecution for sacrilege. The Executive Board of the hospital are divided as to what course they shall pursue. Shall they pass a vote of confidence in their chief, or, on the other hand, suspend him until the determination of the proceedings. By a fine stroke of irony Bernhardi realises

that he will be in a minority through the vote of the very Jew through the conscientious insistence on whose election to the Board he had lost the proffered opportunity of bribing the Clericals and squaring the whole matter. He consequently resigns from the Board. The trial takes place. The priest himself denies that there was any assault. Bernhardi, however, is defended by a converted Jew, who, sinking the advocate in the Catholic, conducts the case so lukewarmly that Bernhardi is convicted on the perjured evidence of a vindictive colleague and a hysterical lay sister. During the trial the priest is convinced that Bernhardi was morally right in the course which he adopted, but, as he feels subsequently driven as a matter of conscience to inform him, refrained out of sheer religious duty from telling the truth. Bernhardi serves his term and becomes, much to his disgust, a political hero and a popular martyr. The hysterical lay sister eventually confesses her perjury and Bernhardi is finally righted, though the final note in the play is that Bernhardi was really rather a fool to have involved himself in such grave consequences for the mere sake of a quixotic principle. Some portion possibly of the effect produced by this play depends on the full appreciation of its personal allusions and some knowledge of the circumstances on which it was substantially founded. Nevertheless, present symptoms would appear to indicate that this play will have especial interest, not only to Jews and Anti-Semites, but to impartial students of ethics and sociology. Though, moreover, "pure problem" and studded with long didactical speeches, the dramatic interest is well sustained, at any rate up to the fourth Act, while the different characters are distinguished with the sharpest precision. We would refer in particular

to Flint, that delightfully bland opportunist, that benevolently unscrupulous politician, that perfectly conscientious hypocrite who honestly believes that there is a higher and larger duty both in politics and in life than the observance of one's own principles and the keeping of one's given word.

Schnitzler, moreover, is not only a dramatist, but a writer of short stories and novels, which stand on practically as high a level as his plays. Like De Maupassant, Schnitzler has only one real *motif*. Unlike De Maupassant, however, it is the psychological complications in which he is chiefly interested. In further contrast, his short stories lack that inevitable precision of climax which is the chief mark of the French author. Yet perhaps it is for this very reason that, with their picturesque atmosphere and pathetic simplicity, they obtain an added reality. In the almost clinical minuteness of his psychology, explicable from the fact that he was once a doctor, he is reminiscent of Mr. Henry James, of a Mr. James, however, who writes without preciosity about individuals linked with ordinary human beings by very much more than just some shred of normality. Among his earlier short stories we would mention in particular *Die Frau der Weisen*, *Das neue Lied*, and the hypnotic fantasia at the beginning of *Dämmerseelen*.

The more recent series, *Masken und Wunder*, also possesses a well-merited claim to recognition for its series of studies, some modern, some symbolical, yet all written with that almost intangible softness, combined at the same time with a certain neat strength, which is the essential mark of Schnitzler's literary style. One of the most striking is the telepathic romance, *Redegonda's Diary;* but in our view the best short story in the whole book is that Maupassantian *Death of the Bachelor* where the three intimate friends

of a dead man are summoned to his bedside, only to find their friend dead and to read in a letter addressed to them all, of the three separate yet identical domestic reasons which were responsible for their participation in this superb piece of posthumous buffoonery.

Far more significant than any of his short stories is Schnitzler's comparatively recent novel, *Der Weg in's Freie* (The Road to the Open), a novel which both by its actual success and its intrinsic merit, stands out conspicuously among modern German literature. This book is an admirable example of what one can perhaps call the "slice of life" novel. Actual plot in the stereotyped sense of the term it has none. Georg von Wergenthin, a young aristocratic Viennese dilettante, has, in the course of an active emotional life, a fairly serious *liaison* with Anna Rosner, a music-mistress belonging to a good Jewish set. The child to which Anna and Georg had both been looking forward, though in somewhat varying degrees, dies. Georg accepts a post of conductor in a German town. Anna reassumes the normal tenor of her spinster life. Finis. Neither conventional marriage nor even more conventional suicide, but just life, a slice of sheer probable real convincing life. But the book is far more than the history of Anna, and far more than the history of Georg, even though it would appear at first sight that the enumeration of Georg's emotions tends somewhat to swamp the four hundred and sixty pages of this novel which yet reads so shortly. For Georg's soul is a mirror which reflects not only itself but a considerable number of the more interesting characters of a specific modern Viennese set. And the lives of Anna and Georg touch the lives of numerous other persons, persons

too who, at any rate, give the impression of being no mere characters in novels, but of having been honourably plagiarised, and without suffering either caricature or idealisation in the process, from the pages of the book of life itself. And all these various lives are followed up and adumbrated and described at greater or lesser detail. Of course they have nothing to do with the story of Georg von Wergenthin. But they play an important part in the life of Georg von Wergenthin, just as he plays a more or less important part in their existence. And though of course Georg is the nominal hero of the book, it is the modern Jewish set with, of course, its Gentile appanages which constitutes the real subject-matter. And how vivid and interesting on their merits are all these characters—old Ehrenberg, the Jewish millionaire, with his delightful habit of talking Yiddish before smart company, specially to annoy his snobbish son Oskar; Oskar himself, who, on being caught by his father in the flagrant act of posing as a Catholic in front of a church and given a box on the ears by way of reproof, makes an abortive attempt to commit hara-kiri with a revolver; Else Ehrenberg, the temperamental, but unmarried sister of Oskar; Heinrich Bermann, the brilliant self-centred author, with his grand passion for his faithless actress in the foreign town; Leo Golowski, the enthusiastic Zionist; Therese Golowski, the Socialist agitatress, with her temporary trip with that fascinating hussar-officer, Demeter Stanzides; Winternitz, the poet, with his not very *soigné* hands and his naïf mania for reciting his own erotic verses; Dr. Stauber, the benevolent modern of the last generation; Anna herself, with her soft wistfulness and her essential dignity; Sissy Wyner, with her high wanton spirits and pretty English accent; and of course Georg himself, Georg

the aristocrat, Georg the *grand amoureux*, Georg the composer, Georg the dilettante, Georg the drifter, Georg the ineffectual.

In the technique of this novel Schnitzler marks what we suggest to be a new departure, by the insertion of substantial slabs of past life into the analysis of his hero's thoughts, a process which by a tremendous economy of space and time thus describes simultaneously the inner workings of Georg's mind, and simultaneously narrates important pieces of antecedent history which have no place in the official action of the novel.

Some tribute, also, must be paid to the style, which is at times soft and sweet, at times light and crisp, yet always lucid, always individual, and always possessed of that gracefulness which is so rare a quality in German prose literature.

To revert to Schnitzler the dramatist, what are his chief claims, his chief excellences, his chief defects? It seems to us that the essence of his merit lies in the fact that, speaking broadly, he handles problems neither as ends in themselves, as do the more advanced of our own dramatists, nor yet, like Sudermann, as mere pegs on which to hang violently theatrical stage effects. Some problem may constitute the centre of most of his plays; yet, with a few exceptions, this problem is not presented too nakedly or without sufficient relief. Each problem is bathed in an artistic atmosphere, and each character in the picture limned with the most subtle psychology. It is true that, as has already been pointed out, many of the acts in his early longer dramas exhibit too strong a tendency to form self-independent pictures; yet it is this defect which forms the chief charm of his one-acters. It is true that nearly all his characters are Bohemian—artists,

flâneurs, actresses, journalists, doctors, painters—yet each author creates, as of right, the population of his own individual world; and is it not rather a claim to glory to have attained such heights of dramatic celebrity without having written more than one single play specifically devoted to fashionable life? It is true that the ethics of these plays, with their chronic and inevitable intrigues, may strike the English mind as somewhat unusual; yet Schnitzler enjoys the reputation of being the most brilliant and accurate portrayer of contemporary Viennese life. It is, moreover, in the nature of all problem plays that they should be pieces of special pleading, where the other side is allowed just so much of a hearing as will not permit of its convincing. After all, from the standpoint of dramatic art, that which counts is not the ethics, but the presentation of the problem.

Yet, with all his subtlety and all his problems, he is never heavy. Vienna stands intellectually nearer to Paris than to Berlin, so that the Teutonic introspection and sentimentalism are touched with a Gallic sprightliness and a Gallic grace. No dramatist has written tragedy with so light a hand, or comedy with so ironically pathetic a smile, as has Arthur Schnitzler.

ÉMILE VERHAEREN

" Mais les plus exaltés se dirent dans leur cœur,
' Partons quand même avec notre âme inassouvie
Puisque la force et que la vie
Sont au delà des vérités et des erreurs.' "

" Vivre c'est prendre et donner avec liesse.
Toute la vie est dans l'essor."

THE above principles, prefixed to the *Forces Tumultueuses* of Émile Verhaeren, are well fitted to supply the key to a man who both in thought and in technique is indisputably the most modern and the most massive force in the whole of contemporary European poetry. For Verhaeren is no narrow specialist with an outlook limited to some particular sphere. He is the singer of the whole fulness of modern European life as a whole, with its clashes, its complexities, its agonies and its tensions, its deserted country-sides and its pullulating metropoles, its armaments and its Armageddons, its brothels, cathedrals, laboratories and Stock Exchanges, its sciences and its sensualities, its arts, philosophies and aspirations. His muse is no serene nymph piping delicately on some Parnassian slope, but an extremely tumultuous Amazon, at once primeval, and ultra-modern, chanting the pæan of battle, steeped in the wine of victory, and suckling the supermen of the future on her universal breasts. No muse in the whole of literature is more highly charged with vitality, and no reader is qualified to enjoy her unless he, too, is charged to the maximum with " the red tonic liquor of a harsh and formidable reality."

Let us then glance first at the early *milieu* of a

man who combines the exultant fury of the lyric with the wide outlook of the cosmopolitan sociologist, and who can incidentally beat both Baudelaire and Wordsworth at their own respective game.

Verhaeren was born on the 21st May 1855 at St. Amand in Belgium, one of the most strenuous countries in the modern world, which, it is interesting to remember, holds the European record for sensualism, alcoholism, and clericalism. St. Amand is situated on the broad plains of the Scheldt, and it is not unimportant to lay some stress on the Flemish ancestry and environment of a man who, though he wrote in the French language, is more Germanic than Gallic in his temperament, and who represents in the sphere of verse perhaps the nearest analogue to the crass majesty and red sensuality of Rubens. His early country upbringing, moreover, is responsible for that *joie de vivre* in the fields, and, above all, the wind, the symbolisation of fury and rebellion which was to inspire those nature lyrics, many of which are nearly as great, though by no means as interesting, as his cosmic and metropolitan poems.

Verhaeren was originally intended for the priesthood, and was educated at the Jesuit school of St. Barbe in Ghent, where he had for his schoolfellows such men as Maeterlinck, Van Lenbergh, and Rodenbach. Leaving school, he went to Brussels, where he felt "his multiplied heart grow and become exalted" with the roaring intensity of metropolitan life. All thoughts of a holy life were now abandoned, and in 1881 the poet was called to the Bar. His chief interests, however, were literature, Socialism, and Brussels life. Joining the Young Belgian group under the leadership of Edmond Picard, he became a frequent contributor to *L'Art Moderne* and *La Jeune Belgique*. Politically he was a Socialist, associated

himself with the Socialist leader Vandervelde, and was one of the founders of the philanthropic *Maison des Peuples.*

But it was in the poetic representation of "the monstrous scenery of the crass Flemish Kermesses" (*Les Flamands,* 1883) that Verhaeren gave the first vent to his violent virility. In this work a Rubensesque and Rabelaisian subject-matter is treated with poetic exaltation by a man who found in the great national festivals of past and present Flanders, with

> "Des chocs de corps, des heurts de chair et des bourrades,
> Des lèchements subis dans un étreignement,"

the same patriotic inspiration which Mr. G. K. Chesterton has discovered in that beer; into which he has, as it were, so successfully transubstantiated the whole national spirit of our English body-politic. Thus our poet wallows defiantly in the black roughness of his Flemish peasants:

> "Les voici noirs, grossiers, bestiaux—ils sont tels,"

or casts regretful glances towards the healthier grossness of the artists of old Flanders:

> "Vos pinceaux ignoraient le fard,
> Les indécences, les malices,
> Et les sous-entendus de vice
> Qui clignent l'œil dans notre art,
> Vos femmes suaient la santé,
> Rouge de sang blanche de graisse,
> Elles menaient les ruts en laisse
> Avec des airs de royauté."

But these poems are far more than mere erotic or gastronomic diversions. Somewhat turgid, no doubt, with red health, they yet possess the same sweep and the same impetus with which Aristophanes himself once gave expression to the riotous fecundity of the earth and the Dionysian forces of nature.

In *Les Moines* (*The Monks*, 1886), Verhaeren treats a subject-matter which *primâ facie* would seem to denote the abandonment of the cult of the flesh for the cult of the spirit. Yet such veneration as the poet may ever have possessed for the Catholic creed was æsthetic rather than religious. He penetrates, it is true, into the "enormous shrine where the Middle Ages slumber," but it is less to worship than to describe in a rigid, but majestic prosody "the grand survivors of the Christian world"—the

> "Moines venus vers nous des horizons gothiques
> Mais dont l'âme mais dont l'esprit meurt de demain."

Psychologically the interesting feature of this work is that, so far from being in any way obsessed by any Chestertonian nostalgia for a dead and mediæval past, the poet anticipates with all apparent serenity the day when "the final blasphemy will have transpierced God like to an immense sword." Even, moreover, in these, as it were, antiquarian descriptions the poet emphasizes the contrast between the visionary life of the cloister (a life, albeit, where occasionally

> "Un répas colossal souffle fourneaux béants
> Éructant vers l'azur sa flamme et sa fumée")

and the real life of the outside world, and seems by no means unsympathetic to the rebellious monk who requires

> "Le ciel torride et le desert et l'air des monts
> Et les tentations en rut des vieux démons
> Agaçant de leurs doigts la chair enflée des gouges
> En lui brûlant la lèvre avec de grands seins rouges."

Yet both *Les Flamands* and *Les Moines* seem quite innocent and playful in comparison with the great black trinity of *Les Soirs*, *Les Débâcles*, and *Les Flambeaux Noirs* (1887–1891), in which Verhaeren

gave expression to the mental and physical crisis which for a time seemed to imperil both his life and his reason. In these poems, many of which were written in London and its

> "Gares de suie et de fumée ou du gaz pleure
> Ses spleens d'argent lointain vers des chemins d'éclair,
> Où des bêtes d'ennui baîllent à l'heure
> Dolente immensément qui tinte à Westminster,"

Verhaeren leaves the objective mood of his earlier poems to clothe his soul in the Nessian shirt of the most poisonous subjectivity. But true tragic dignity stalks in the very extremity of his agony. Compared, indeed, with the gigantic bass of this unhappiness, black, definite, drastic, what is the grey wistfulness of Verlaine but the hysterical falsetto of a whining child? Verhaeren, on the other hand, with the ecstatic defiance of a kind of Nietzschean Prometheus sets himself to plumb the lowest abysses of despair, and himself eggs on the eagles of torment to devour every shred of his own soul. With "brutal teeth of fire and madness he bites and outrages his own heart within him," lashes himself in his thought and in his blood, in his effort, in his hope, in his blasphemy:

> "Et quand lève le soir son calice de lie
> Je me le verse à boire insatiablement."

Or take again the sinister gusto of the passage:

> "Aurai-j'enfin l'atroce joie
> De voir nuits après nuits comme une proie
> La démence attaquer mon cerveau,
> Et détraque, malade, sorti de la prison
> Et des travaux forcés de sa raison
> D'appareiller vers un lointain nouveau?"

The technique of these poems is worthy of some study. Having little use for the orthodox alexandrine (except in a few instances like *Le Gel*,

where the icy massiveness of the blocked couplets faithfully mirrors the polar desolation of his own soul), he fashions his own metres to incarnate his own moods. Such a refrain as "Ce minuit dallé d'ennui" will boom out again and again the dull monotonous clank of his own weary spirit. At other times the grinding engines of a disorganised mind whirr and jar with spasmodic feverishness:

"C'est l'heure où les hallucinés,
Les gueux, et les déracinés
Dressent leur orgueil dans la vie."

Note, too, the ghastly effectiveness of the internal rhymes. Is not, for instance, such a line as

"Les chiens du noir espoir ont aboyé ce soir"

a triple series, as it were, of metrical mirrors, where the bitten mind barks savagely back at its own mad image. Or listen to the Titanic thud of such a line as

"La Mer choque ses blocs de flots contre les rocs,"

or the silent smash of

"Dîtes suis-je seul avec mon âme,
Mon âme hélas maison d'ébène
Où s'est fendu sans bruit un soir
Le grand miroir de mon espoir?"

At times transcending the blank negativity of despair, the poet will coquet positively with his own madness, as he wanders "hallucinated in the forest of numbers," or wishes to march towards "madness and her suns, her white suns of moonlight in the great weird noon, and her distant echoes bitten by dins and barkings and full of vermilion hounds." Or abandoning the more specific formulation of his own emotions, he will give vent to his feelings by letting his brain dance upon the lurid boards of some *macabre* theme. The little poem, *La Tête*, is dank with all the smooth bloodi-

ness of the guillotine, while the *Dame en Noir*, with the ghastly rhymes and assurances of its refrain, is swathed in a black pathos, in comparison with which the most lurid horrors of Baudelaire appear the mere artificial extravagances of a perverse mind.

As we have already seen, the blackness of the trilogy which we have just considered was no mere dabbling in morbidity, but the genuine expression of a genuine unhappiness. In, however, *Les Apparus dans Mes Chemins*, *Les Vignes de Ma Muraille* the storm gradually exhausts itself, and is replaced by a more serene and confident mood. Contrast, for instance, with the drastic violence of *Les Débâcles* the jaded weariness of such a lyric as *Celui de la Fatigue*, where the poet sings of an "ardour broken on the whirling staircase of the infinite," or of such a passage as

> " Je m'habille des loques de mes jours
> Et le bâton de mon orgueil il plie,
> Mes pieds dîtes comme ils sont lourds
> De me porter de me traîner toujours
> Au long de siècle de ma vie."

And as a complete antithesis, again, to the black bloodiness of such poems as *La Tête* or *Un Meurtre*, take the white suavity of *St. Georges:*

> " Il vient un bel ambassadeur
> Du pays blanc illuminé de marbres
> Où dans les parcs au bords des mers sur l'arbre
> De la bonté suavement croît la douceur."

But this serenity marked rather a respite in Verhaeren's development than a real abatement of his poetic fury. With the furnaces of his mind recharged to their maximum capacity with blazing health, he starts to race his muse over the main lines of the modern civilisation, which lead from *The Hallucinated Country-sides* to *The Tentacular Towns.*

Though written at different times, these two sets of poems constitute the contrasting halves of a complete whole, and were published together in 1895 with two prologues, *La Ville* and *La Plaine*. The prologues, in particular, well illustrate the new rushing irregular prosody, specially forged for the purpose of hammering out that white-hot steel of the modern civilisation which enmeshes in its fabric all the helpless flotsam of the agricultural economy. The academic harmony of the alexandrine is here abandoned. The rhymes crash out at lesser and greater intervals as they march along on feet that range from the quick spasm of some dissyllabic line to the spondaic emphasis of a full-length alexandrine.

In *Les Campagnes Hallucinés* itself the prosody is no doubt simpler, as the poet describes the ruined and pestilential country with its fevers, its sins, its beggars, its pilgrims, its diseases, insanities and debauches, and the immense monotony of its interminable plains.

"C'est la plaine, la plaine blême
Interminablement toujours la même,
Par au-dessus, souvent
Rage si forte le vent,
Que l'on dirait le ciel fendu
Au coup de boxe
De l'équinoxe;
Novembre hurle ainsi qu'un loup
Lamentable par le soir fou."

Perhaps, however, the most sinister poems in *Les Campagnes* are the *Chansons de Fou*, with their naïf absurdities and their intuitive reason, where the rhymes laugh and clatter like rows of grinning teeth, and the almost Dureresque *Le Fleau*, from its exordium,

"La Mort a bu du sang
Au carbaret des Trois Cercueils

La Mort a mis sur le comptoir
Un écu noir,
'C'est pour les cierges, pour les deuils,'"

down to its ghastly climax,

"Et les foules suivaient vers n'importent où,
Le grand squelette aimable et soûl
Qui trimballait sur son cheval bonhomme
L'épouvante de sa personne,
Jusqu'aux lointains de peur et de panique,
Sans éprouver l'horreur de son odeur,
Ni voir danser, sous un repli de sa tunique,
Le trousseau de vers blancs qui lui têtaient le cœur."

The final significance of *Les Campagnes* lies in its last poem, *Le Départ*, describing the desertion by the whole country-side of that dead mournful plain which is being eaten up by the town.

"Tandis qu'au loin là-bas
Sous les cieux lourds fuligineux et gras,
Avec son front comme un Thabor,
Avec ses suçoirs noirs et ses rouges haleines
Hallucinant et attirant les gens des plaines,
C'est la ville que le jour plombe et que la nuit éclaire
La ville en plâtre, en stuc, en bois, en marbre, en fer, en or—
Tentaculaire."

It is, however, in *Les Villes Tentaculaires*, where the fever and indefatigable aspiration of the town are described with a Zolaesque exaltation, that the originality of the departure initiated by Verhaeren is more specifically manifested. For he now boldly stalks forward as the pioneer realist in European poetry. Disregarding alike the orthodox subject-matter and the orthodox terminology of official poesy, he seeks and finds his inspiration in the vast forces at work in actual modern life. The realism of Verhaeren, in somewhat pointed contrast to the realism of some of our own patriotic or fashionable poets, even though such expressions as "cabs" and "steamers" are to be found in his work in the original English,

depends for its æsthetic value neither on the swing of its slang nor the egregiousness of its expletives. The hot blast of his sincerity sweeps away at once any impeachment of mere dabbling in the ultra-modern. His diction is frequently brusque, and even red, if we may borrow his favourite colour, if not his favourite adjective; yet it never loses the dignity of authentic poetry. For the poet would seem to have been personally susceptible, in the highest degree, to that peculiar multiplication of vitality and intensification of emotion which is the essential effect produced by big metropoles upon certain temperaments. And this cerebral ecstasy is increased by the consciousness of being on the threshold of a new age, "for the ancient dream is dead, and the new one is now being forged." Thus the poet will wander into *The Cathedrals*, take pity on the multitudinous misery of the praying hordes, and boom out again and again the refrain:

> "Ô ces foules, ces foules
> Et la misère et la détresse qui les foulent."

But note the sociological symbolism of the climax:

> "Et les vitraux grands de siècles agenouillés
> Devant le Christ avec leurs papes immobiles
> Et leurs martyrs et leurs héros semblent trembler
> Au bruit d'un train lointain qui roule sur la ville."

For refusing to bear the cross of Gothic ideas, the poet plunges deliberately into the inferno of modern life. And each fresh circle but kindles his ardour and inflames his Muse. For he will pass with growing exaltation from the muscled teeming life of the port to the garish ballet of a music hall where

> "Des bataillons de chair et de cuisses en marche
> Grouillent sur des rampes ou sous des arches,
> Jambes, hanches, gorges, maillots, jupes, dentelles,"

and then, as midnight strikes and the crowd ebbs

away, he will stalk into the "brilliant chemical atmosphere" where

> "Au long de promenoirs qui s'ouvrent sur la nuit
> —Balcons de fleurs, rampes de flammes—
> Des femmes en deuil de leur âme
> Entrecroisent leurs pas sans bruit."

Nor does the poet disdain the grinding factories where

> "Entre des murs de fer et pierre
> Soudainement se lève altière
> La force en rut de la matière,"

or even the Bourse itself, where he sings in feverish staccato rhythm the

> "Langues sèches, regards aigus, gestes inverses,
> Et cervelles qu'en tourbillons les millions traversent."

But it is typical of Verhaeren's essential optimism that after describing with Zolaesque detail both a strike and a "shop of luxury," he should find the ransom of the future in

> "La maison de la science au loin dardée
> Obstinément par à travers les faits jusqu'aux idées."

In *Les Heures Claires* (1896) the drastic violence of *Les Villes Tentaculaires* abates for the time being into a mood of resigned, but yet robust melancholy, which immortalises the sweetness, deepness, and softness of the poet's love for his wife.

In *Les Forces Tumultueuses*, however, the poet has got once again into the full swing of his drastic stride. The mood is to some extent the same as that of *Les Villes Tentaculaires*, though the Zolaesque concreteness of detail is merged in the broadness of a genuine Lucretian sweep. The book consists of a series of lyrical poems, lyrical, albeit, in the sense rather of Pindar than of Herrick, which exalt the various

phases of human energy. Thus in the poem, *L'Art*, Verhaeren soars upwards with a tremendous rush:

"D'un bond
Son pied cassant le sol profond
Son double aile dans la lumière
Le cou tendu, le feu sous les paupières
Partit, vers le soleil et vers l'extase,
Ce devoreur d'espace et de splendeur Pégase."

In *Les Maîtres* the poet describes the various types of superman, from "the monk" of the Middle Ages to the banker of the twentieth century, who dominates the world as he "binds sinister destiny to his bourgeois will," and sows in the distance his winged gold.

"Son or aile qui s'enivre d'espace,
Son or planant, son or rapace,
Son or vivant,
Son or dont s'éclairent et rayonnent les vents,
Son or qui boit la terre
Par les pores de son misère
Son or ardent, son or furtif, son or retors.
Morceau d'espoir et de soleil—son or!"

Some mention must also be made of the poem, *Les Femmes*, which, subdivided into *L'Éternelle*, *L'Amante*, *L'Amazone*, ranks in our view as the greatest sex poem of the century. In contrast, for instance, with Swinburne, who treats sex rather as a thing of beauty and of pleasure than as an underlying world-force, and who has both the advantage and the disadvantage of the specifically classical conception of life, Verhaeren, whether he rings his changes in *L'Amante* on the soft refrain, "Mon rêve est embarqué dans une île flottante," shows in *L'Amazone* that the New Woman can be something considerably more poetic than a Strindbergian monstrosity, or sings in *L'Éternelle* her "who thinks she encloses the whole world within her flesh," will boom out again and again the cosmic and universal peal. The verse throughout is as beautiful as

can be desired. But it has something more than beauty; it has stature, majesty, speed, force, that exaltation of reality which is the essence of the highest poetry.

In the poems, *La Science, L'Erreur, La Folie, Les Cultes,* Verhaeren proceeds to formulate his own philosophy of life, and his prophetic enthusiasm for the new modern truths, under whose clear feet the old texts have crumbled, as he expounds

> "Comment la vie est une à travers tous les êtres
> Qu'ils soient matière instruit esprit ou volonté
> Forêt myriadaire et rouge où s'enchevêtrent
> Les débordements fous de la fécondité."

Put shortly, his philosophy is a compound of those of Nietzsche and of Bergson. His soul, no doubt, swings in unison with the universal rhythm of the world, but, like Nietzsche, he finds in force and life realities transcending all errors, and after a historic survey of the more popular deities of humanity from Gog to Jehovah, and from Satan to Christ, enunciates his belief in humanity in stanzas of sublime blasphemy, far more truly religious than the ambiguous scrolls and rubrics of any antiquarian creed:

> "L'homme respire et sur la terre il marche, seul.
> Il vit pour s'exalter du monde et de lui-même,
> Sa langue oublie et la prière et le blasphême;
> Ses pieds foulent le drap de son ancien linceul.
> Il est l'heureuse audace au lieu d'être la crainte;
> Tout l'infini ne retentit que de ses bonds
> Vers l'avenir plus doux, plus clair et plus féconds
> Dont s'aggrave le chant et s'alentit la plainte.
> Penser, chercher, et découvrir sont ses exploits.
> Il emplit jusqu'aux bords son existence brève;
> Il n'enfle aucun espoir, il ne fausse aucun rêve,
> Et s'il lui faut des Dieux encore—qu'il les soit!"

In *La Multiple Splendeur* and *Les Visages de la Vie* the same insatiable gusto for an infinitude of life darts

again and again its red tongue. It is impossible by mere quotation to do justice to the full vastness of Verhaeren's lyric sweep. We would, however, at any rate, refer to the majesty of *Le Monde* with its combined crash and concord of incessant life and the Cyclopean weight of the adamantine line which buttresses at either end the flaming rivers of its verse,

"Le monde est fait avec des astres et des hommes,"

or to the sublimity of *Les Penseurs* in which the poet tells how

"Autour de la terre obsédée
Circule au fond des nuits, au cœur des jours
Toujours
L'orage amoncelé des idées,"

and how

"Descarte et Spinoza, Liebnitz, Kant et Hegel"

"fixed the highest pinnacles of inaccessible problems for the goal of their silver arrows, and carried within themselves the grand obstinate dream of one day, imprisoning eternity in the white ice of immobile truth."

The very names, too, of some of the poems may possibly reflect some of the facets of their multiplied splendour: *Le Verbe, Les Vieux Empires, La Louange du Corps Humain, A la Gloire des Cieux, A la Gloire du Vent, Les Rêves, L'Europe, La Conquête, Les Souffrances, La Joie, La Ferveur, Les Idées, La Vie, L'Effort, L'Action, Plus Loin que les Gares, Le Soir.* And again and again rings out in various keys the true Nietzschean note. For "vast hopes come from the unknown" has displaced the ancient balance whereof souls are now tired. But the only reality is life:

"La vie en cris ou en silence,
La vie en lutte ou en accord
Avec la vie avec la mort
La vie âpre, la vie intense,

Elle est ici dans la fureur ou dans la haine
De l'ascendant et rouge ardeur humaine."

It is fine proof also of the vast vitality of Verhaeren that even in so recent a work as *Les Rhythmes Souveraines* the muscled majesty of his verse, though possibly a trifle less violent, shows no abatement of its essential strength. We would mention in particular the poems *Michel Ange, Chant d'Hercule, Les Barbares* with the swift crispness of its one-foot lines, and above all *Le Paradis* with its almost Miltonic picture of

"L'archange endormant Éve au creux de sa grande aile."

But does not Verhaeren transcend Milton in the wideness of his humanity when he describes not with regret but with the maximum of exalted exultation how

"Éve bondit soudain hors de son aile immense,
Oh l'heureuse subite et féconde démence,
Que l'ange avec son cœur trop pur ne comprit pas."

In his latest volume, *Les Blés Mouvants*, Verhaeren sinks back no doubt to a quieter and serener mood, but who shall say that these eclogues do not simply represent the sage crouch for another leonine spring?

We do not propose to make more than a passing reference to Verhaeren's plays, for it is the lyric rather than the drama which is his true medium of expression.

Hélène de Sparte, with all its graceful Alexandrines, is inferior to any play by D'Annunzio, and even the socialist drama *Les Aubes* is, notwithstanding the fine verses with which it is sown, simply stiff and heavy when compared with Hauptmann's *Weavers*. It is by his lyrics that Verhaeren lives, and will continue to live beyond his mere death whenever it comes, as the greatest and most essentially European poet of

our new age. For his lyrics are equally great, both in their message and the method of their expression. Disdaining alike the cowardice and the perversity of those who, refusing to face the red realities of the present century, fly for their comfort to the pale shadows of the Middle Ages, Verhaeren has plunged boldly into the very brazier of our modern existence. He affirms, he combats, he prophesies, but he rarely, if ever, rests. He hymns every phase of life, from the human brain to the human body, and from the winds and seas of nature to the towns and marts of man. And no message is more virile, more tonic, more essentially healthy, for is not his message the phœnix of a new humanitarian faith soaring aloft on its fiery wings out of the corpses of the decomposing dogmas? And his prosody has the supreme excellence that it is not a mere æsthetic end in itself, but a drastic instrument of expression. Your pure æsthete, no doubt, may cavil at his ruggedness. For he is the Rodin of poetical rhyme, the veritable Vulcan of verse, or rather a Siegfried forging the sword of the future on the anvil of the present, as he drives in the stubborn nails of his nouns with the hissing hammers of his adjectives. His lines no doubt at times will growl, grind and boom, hit the reader in the face with all the force of a clenched fist, and palpitate with a full-bloodedness somewhat overpowering for the jaded and the anæmic. But is not this the very seal of success in a man who specifically sets himself to sing not the mere beauty of beauty, but the beauty of force, the beauty of life, "life violent, prodigious, unsatiated, the universal spasm of all things"?

THE FUTURE OF FUTURISM

"Repose-toi ! . . . Repose-toi ! . . . il n'est|doux que dormir ! . . .

Non, la vie est à brûler comme un falot de paille,
Il faut l'ingurgiter d'une lampée hardie,
Tels ces jongleurs de foire qui vont mangeant du feu
D'un coup de langue, escamotant la Mort dans l'estomac."

THE above quotation from M. Marinetti's poem, *Le Démon de la Vitesse*, is well adapted to give some idea of the feverish but sustained energy of those pictures whose recent exhibition in the Sackville Gallery so successfully scandalised not only the *doyens* of the Royal Academy but even the official champions of all that is new and progressive in our modern English art. But for a correct appreciation even of the Futurist pictures themselves, it is essential to realise that, so far from being the mere isolated extravagances and *tours de force* of a new technique, they constitute an integral part of a living scheme, which with all its lavish use of the most ostentatious hyperbolism, has yet claims to be seriously considered as a substantial movement, artistic, literary, economic, sociological, and above all human.

Let us then make some scrutiny of this "Rising City" of Futurism, as it rears with such vehement exaltation from out the trampled debris of a superseded and dishonoured past. For this purpose, having first examined those conditions of contemporary Italy which more immediately provoked this "Red Rebellion," we shall proceed to some analysis of the general character of the movement and of

the aggressive and sensational works of M. Marinetti himself, the audacious Mercury of this new message.

The direct cause of the Futurist movement is to be found in the fact that that modern current of electric energy, which has been galvanising the states of Northern and Central Europe to a more and more strenuous and a more and more complicated activity has, so far as Italy is concerned, not succeeded in flowing further south than Milan. In this connection it is not without its significance that, while Milan is indubitably the vital and commercial capital of the peninsula, the official capital should be merely Rome, aureoled with its hybrid halo of majesty and malaria, the centre of the tourist, the archæologist, and the Papacy, that august shadow of a once living empire.

Even, moreover, the great heroes of the *Risorgimento Italiano*, the euphonious title by which Italians designate the unification of their country, suffered from an undue obsession with the democratic ideals of a mediæval past. Dissipating their energy in rushing reams of republican rhetoric or the purple pomp of patriotic platitudes, they remained sublimely oblivious to the crying economic needs of a country which, with all its natural richness and all its natural genius, still, so far as general material and intellectual progress is concerned, lags no inconsiderable distance behind the increasingly quick march of the European civilisation. Nor did matters improve when the régime of the naïf idealists was succeeded by that of the opportunist bureaucracy which has since governed Italy. A vast portion of the country still remains unforested, uncultivated, unirrigated, and above all uneducated. The taint of malaria still infects wide tracts of land, which with proper treatment might have been profitably

developed by those masses of sturdy labourers who have emigrated to America with an almost Irish eagerness. Indeed with all respect to M. Marinetti, who has himself fought in the Tripolitan trenches, the Italo-Turkish war was occasioned (if we can rely on one of the most brilliant and responsible of the Parisian reviews) not so much by a *bonâ fide* desire to find a place in the sun for the not yet surplus population of a not yet fully developed country, as by an indisputably authentic ambition to find a lucrative outlet for the money of the clique of clerical capitalists who control the Bank of Rome. So far, however, as no inconsiderable portion of Italy itself is concerned, we are confronted with a country of museums, ruins, and ciceroni which, exploiting the *Fremdenindustrie* after the manner of some more perverse and inexcusable Switzerland, prostitutes with venal ostentation the faded beauties of its undoubtedly glorious past to the complete ruin of its only potentially splendid present.

A certain pseudo-Nietzscheanism has no doubt been introduced into Italy beneath the auspices of D'Annunzio. Yet, with all his fanfaronnade of tense and exuberant virility, the atmosphere of D'Annunzio is, speaking broadly, moistly rank and exotically enervating. With the possible exception of his latest novel, his heroes are languidly feverish dilettantes whose lives are principally devoted to the literary and æsthetic cultivation of all the neurotic luxuriance of their own erotic morbidities. This brings us to the important sociological fact of that rigid obsession with sex, as the one paramount emotional, artistic, and vital value which, sapping the manhood not only of Italy but also indeed of France, tends to corrupt the whole social, political, and economic life of the two nations.

It is this exaggerated preoccupation with the sexual aspect of life which has produced, by way of a vehement but deliberate *riposte*, the important Futurist maxim, "Méprisez la femme." With an enthusiasm in fact almost worthy of our own Young Men's Christian Association, these comparative Hippolyti of a young mother-country, only recently wedded in the bonds of political union, flaunt themselves as the unscrupulous iconoclasts of such firmly established national ideals as "the glorious conception of Don Juan and the grotesque conception of the coçu." Thus the Futurists would banish the nude from painting and adultery from the novel, so that they may be able to substitute the sublime male fury of creation of artistic and scientific masterpieces for all the sterile embraces of hedonistic eroticism, and, like some gallant band of twentieth-century Hercules, cleanse the Augean stables of the Latin civilisation of its vast surplus of malignant mud vomited forth by that stewing and pestiferous swamp of sex. As an antidote to that virulent plague of luxurious and diseased sexuality, which it is their self-imposed mission to eradicate, they pen the drastic prescription of "patriotism and war, the only hygiene of the world." So hot indeed is the ardour of these militant apostles of a new Latin civilisation, that they once incurred the displeasure of established authority by insisting on a war with Austria with such a maxim of vehemence that an Austrian journal actually demanded the intervention of the Italian Government.

And whether this policy indicates the mere tetanic spasms of a delirious Chauvinism, or the lucid vision of an inspired if heretical diplomacy, it is certainly symptomatic of a tense, combative, and drastic energy which is, in the deepest sense of the word, essentially Nietzschean. In this connection the attitude of the

Futurists towards Nietzsche is instructive. They have read his books, thrilled to his magic, and yet they repudiate him. For they cavil, and not altogether unreasonably, at the bigoted and hide-bound dualism of Nietzsche's political philosophy, and his obstinate and obsolete division of the political world into the divine spirit of a few strong geniuses and the brute matter of a weak and numerous proletariate.

Yet, taking the matter in its broad lines, M. Marinetti's programme for "the indefinite physiological and intellectual progress of man" expresses admirably the whole theory of the Nietzschean Superman. Nietzschean also are such phrases as, "the type inhuman, mechanical, cruel, omniscient and combative," or "the multiplied man who mingles with iron, nourishes himself on electricity, and only appreciates the delight of the danger and of the heroism of every single day." The real distinction lies in the fact that the Futurist Superman is more practical, more concrete, more up-to-date, and, above all, infinitely less dreamy than his elder and more pedantic brother.

And in spite of M. Marinetti's analysis of Nietzscheanism as nothing but the artificial resurrection of a dead and past antiquity, the two ideals are harmonious in their denunciation of the facile and automatic reverence for "the good old days," and their savage exhortation to "sweep away the grey cinders of the Past with the incandescent lava of the Future."

This announcement of a virile desire to improve and improve and improve, not only on the past but also on the present, constitutes the principal mark in the Futurist platform. Hence the leaders of the movement have coined the two words *passéisme*, the object of their onslaught, and *Futurism*, the watch-

word of their faith. And truculently pushing their theories to the extreme limit of extravagant logic, M. Marinetti and his brothers in arms exhorted the assembled Venetians, in the 200,000 multicoloured manifestos which on a certain memorable day they flung down into the Piazza San Marco, "to cure and cicatrize this rotting town, magnificent wound of the Past, and to hasten to fill its small fœtid canals with the ruins of its tumbling, leprous palaces." But the remedy is constructive as well as destructive.

"Burn the gondolas, those swings for fools, and erect up to the sky the rigid geometry of large metallic bridges and factories with waving hair of smoke; abolish everywhere the languishing curve of the old architecture."

We see at once how, in this more than Wellsian enthusiasm for all the romantic possibilities of a scientific civilisation, they declare the most sanguinary war *à l'outrance* with that Ruskinian and Pre-Raphaelite sentimentalism which, sublimely burying its mediæval head in the immemorial sands of a crumbling past, is somewhat ill-adapted to confront the onrushing simoon of an increasingly definite and formidable future. And with the deliberate object of emphasizing his point with the maximum of provocative aggressiveness, the Futurist will fling at his enemies the insolent paradox that a motor-car in motion has a higher æsthetic value than the Victory of Samothrace, or announce with theatrical solemnity that the pain of a man is just about as interesting in their eyes as the pain of an electric lamp, suffering in convulsive spasms and crying out with the most agonising effects of colour.

Yet if we strip this new "beauty of mechanism" and "æsthetic of speed" of its loud garb of ostentatious extravagance, the intrinsic theories themselves strike

us as neither monstrous nor unreasonable. For if we may presume to put our own unauthorised gloss on M. Marinetti's vividly illuminated manuscript, what the Futurist really wishes is to break down the conventional divorce that is so often thought to exist between ideal Art and actual Life, so as to bring the two elements into the most drastic and immediate contact. Art, in fact, should not be an escape *from* but an exaltation *of* the red impetus of life. Art's function is not merely to titillate the dispassionate æsthetic feeling of the dilettante or connoisseur, but to thrill with a keen vital emotion the actual experiencer of life. Form is not an end in itself, its sole function is to extract the whole emotional quality of its content. And when confronted with the problem of what content is best fitted to be the proper subject of artistic representation, your Futurist would promptly retort that, inasmuch as the tumultuous twentieth-century emotions of "steel, pride, fever, and speed" are those to which the twentieth-century civilisation will naturally vibrate with the most authentic sympathy, those emotions and those alone are the proper subject-matter for twentieth-century art.

Having thus obtained some rough idea of the broad lines of the new Futurism, let us proceed to examine its manifestation in the spheres of painting and literature. So far as their painting is concerned, the primary principle of the Futurists is their subordination of intrinsic æsthetic form to emotional content. This principle, though carried to a pitch far transcending anything which had ever been previously essayed, is by no means without its exemplifications, in the history both of past and contemporary art. Even indeed in the eighteenth century Blake had transferred on to the painted canvas his highly abstract ideas of esoteric mysticism.

The content of the pictures of Blake is of course diametrically opposed to the content of the Futurists, yet an authentic analogy lies in the fact that a content at all should have been specifically painted. With a similar qualification we can remember with advantage how Rossetti and Burne-Jones, as indisputably modern in the fact that they had the courage to paint a content at all, as they were indisputably reactionary in the actual content which they felt inspired to portray, gave pictorial representation to the Pre-Raphaelite nostalgia for a præ-mediæval past. More analogous are the canvases of Franz von Stuck, the Munich Secessionist, who also sets out to paint ideas and to give æsthetic form to psychological contents. Thus his *Krieg*, with its grimly triumphant rider, steadfastly pursuing the goal of an ideal future over the wallowing corpses of a transcended present, expresses perfectly in the sphere of paint the whole spirit of the Nietzschean Superman.

Even better examples of the growing predominance of the content in the sphere of art are to be found in Rodin, who moulds even in immobile statuary something of the tumultuous sweep of the present age, or in Max Klinger the creator in concrete form of the most abstract and impalpable ideas.

So also modern music, as represented at any rate by the tense restlessness of Richard Strauss with all his fine shades of crouching fear and exultant cruelty, or the mystical sensuousness of Debussy, ceases to be a mere meaningless euphony of pleasing melody, devoid of any vital significance except its own æsthetic beauty, sets itself more and more to travel, in the sphere of sound, over the whole vibrant gamut of the human emotions.

To achieve the presentation of a content with the maximum of drastic effect, the Futurists have invented

a new technique. Without embarking on any elaborate technical discussion, we would say that their chief principle in the painting of apparently even the most objective phenomena is that it should be the aim of the artist to reproduce no mere picturesque copy of some stationary pose, but that whole sensorial or emotional quality inherent in all dynamic life which radiates to the mind of the spectator, or which again may be simply flashed into dynamic life by the mind of the spectator himself.

And as, according to our latest and most fashionable metaphysical authority, the ego, whether of a man, an insect, or a cosmos, is merely a movement, it should not strike us as altogether unreasonable if the dynamic idea of movement should enter very prominently into the Futurist paintings. For, realising fully that consciousness is a stream and not a pond, and that both cerebral memories and visual impressions are but, as it were, the flying nets hastily created and re-created to catch a world that is perpetually on the run, the Futurists make boldly ingenious efforts to capture the jumping chameleon of truth, by portraying not one but several phases of the unending series of the human cinematograph.

Thus in Severini's picture of the "Pan-Pan dance at the Monico," the artist sets himself to paint the whole moving, multicoloured soul of this by no means spiritual Montmartre tavern, with all its various subdivisions of male and female customers engaged in their mutual revels and their mutual dances, the deviltry of its *rigolo* music, and all the hustling clash and clatter of its insolent carouse.

It is also significant of their general *Weltanschauung* that the Futurists should frequently find their inspiration in the speed, stress, and creativity of a glorious modernity. Thus Russolo's "Rebellion," angular,

aggressive, rampant, reproduces the whole red energy of an insurgent proletariate, while the same painter's "Train" essays, and not unsuccessfully, to paint the very lights and ridges of velocity itself.

The feats of the new culture in the realm of literature are quite as impressive and as sensational as in that of painting. This brings us to some consideration of M. Marinetti himself, both the real and the official, chief of the new movement.

To comprehend the true essence of this man, who certainly constitutes a European portent which, whether hated or loved, can scarcely be ignored, it is necessary to realise that while a poet he is above all a man of the world and of action. While, also, as would appear from his visit to the *Morning Post* correspondent in Tripoli, he is a gentleman inflamed by a genuine if no doubt slightly truculent patriotism, he has all the advantages of being an almost perfect cosmopolitan. Born in Egypt of Italian parents, educated in France, and now directing the Futurist movement from Milan, M. Marinetti combines all the heat of an African temperament with all the mercurial dash and aggressiveness of the modern Latin civilisation. At present only in the early thirties, M. Marinetti founded in the years 1904–1905 his international review *Poesia*. To this journal he endeavoured to attract all that was strenuous, aspiring, and daring in the artistic youth of the Latin civilisation. Eventually the various tentative ideals and ideas which he and his colleagues entertained became crystallised in the word *Futurism*, which grew more and more a definite creed with a more and more definite catechism of literature, music, painting, politics, and life. Since the publication of the first Futurist manifesto in the *Figaro* in 1909, M. Marinetti has devoted

himself to waging with all his militant energy of tongue, sword, and pen the campaign of Futurism. Meeting after meeting, demonstration after demonstration has he addressed in Italy, and, carrying the war into the enemy's country, he has even had the audacity to hurl his defiance from Trieste itself. And if the deliberate provocativeness at which he has pitched his propaganda has brought upon him the venomous hatred of both numerous and powerful enemies, it has merely served to give but an additional fillip to the fury of his impetus.

It is indeed not only amusing, but also an indication of the man's verve and defiance, to remember that when he had been hissed for a whole hour on end in the Theatre Mercadante of Naples, where he was delivering a lecture, and an apparently quite edible orange was eventually thrown at him, he should with fine *bravura* take out his penknife and both peel and eat the orange. In Italy, at any rate, Futurism has swept the universities, and the disciples of the new faith number 50,000. Endeavouring to give to the campaign a cosmopolitan significance, the Futurists have carried their pictures, their manifestos, and their books to Madrid, to Berlin, to Paris (where they were enthusiastically toasted by the "Association Générale des Etudiants," the Parisian equivalent of the Oxford and Cambridge Unions), and even to England itself, which, with a surprising lack of its usual insularity, would actually appear to be taking an intelligent interest in a new movement without waiting, as was the case with Nietzscheanism, until it has first become the respectable if *passée* object of the devotion of Continental academicism.

Before we proceed on our short survey of the chief works of M. Marinetti, which have been written in French and only subsequently translated into Italian,

it is necessary to make some brief mention of the new technique which he employs. This new technique is Free Verse, first introduced into French literature in the *Palais Nomades* of M. Gustave Kahn. It should be remembered, of course, that French Free Verse is an article totally distinct from that mixture of rolling dithyramb and conversational slap-dash which characterises the work of Walt Whitman.

So far indeed as M. Gustave Kahn is concerned, the innovation simply consisted not in any repudiation of rhyme in itself, but in the emancipation of French verse from the strait-waistcoat of the Alexandrine and the strict disciplinary rules of academic composition.

M. Marinetti, on the other hand, in the three volumes which it is now proposed to consider, viz. *La Conquête des Étoiles* (Sansot, 1902), *Destruction* (Vanier, 1904), *La Ville Charnelle* (Sansot, 1908), carries the metrical revolution considerably further. For while the essence of classicism itself when compared with the polyphonic though at times majestic ebullitions of Walt Whitman, they subserve no specific rule. Metre, genuine metre, is invariably present, but the precise shape which it happens to take is determined by the exigencies not of the particular metre in which the poet happens to be writing, but of the particular mood or emotion which clamours for expression in the form most specifically appropriate to its own particular idiosyncrasies. If, in fact, we may endeavour to crystallise the theory of this verse, which though free from mechanical restraint is always subordinate to the command of its own dynamic soul, we should say that it is simply the principle of onomatopœia carried from the sphere of words to the sphere of metre.

In the *Conquête des Étoiles* the twenty-four-year-old

Marinetti, with the characteristic verve of audacious adolescence, essays to open the oyster of the poetical world with the sword of a romantic epic. Bearing evidence at times, in its grandiose anthropomorphism of natural phenomena, of the influence of "his old masters the French Symbolists," the poem of this future champion of a concrete modernity challenges, at any rate in the gigantic massing of its imagery, that grandiose if somewhat bourgeois romantic Victor Hugo. For here poetic Pelion is piled upon poetic Ossa with the most drastic vengeance. For the Sovereign Sea, chanting her inaugural battle-cry,

"Hola-hé! Hola-ho! Stridionla, Stridionla, Stridionla! Stridionlaire!"

to her ancient waves, puissant warriors with venerable beards of foam, lashes them to conquer Space and mount to the assault of the grinning Stars. And missiles are there in her Reservoir of Death—"petrified bodies, bodies of steel, embers and gold, harder than the diamond, the suicides whose courage failed beneath the weight of their heart, that furnace of stars, those who died for that they stoked within their blood the fire of the Ideal, the great flame of the Absolute that encompassed them." And for an army has she the legions of her amazon cavalry, the veterans of the Sea, the great waves, the riotous, prancing narwhals with their scaly rings, the typhoons, the cyclones and the haughty trombes (water-spouts), "draping around their loins their fuliginous veils, or lifting masses of darkness in their great open arms." And so this feud of the elements proceeds from climax to climax, from crescendo to crescendo, till the astral fortresses succumb to the shock of an infernal charge, and the last star expires "with her pupils of grey shadow imploring the Unknown, oh how sweetly."

No doubt the poem almost reels at times as though

intoxicated with the excesses of its own imagery. Yet making all due discount for this healthy turgidity of adolescence, it is impossible to dispute the authentic poetical value of this brilliant epic.

By so masterly a grasp is the metre handled that the reader, quite oblivious of the immaterial question of whether he is perusing verse or prose, is only conscious of the ideas and emotions themselves. The following passage is typical not only of the poem's potency of expression, but of the intimate union which is effected between the meaning and the form.

> "C'est ainsi que passe le Simoun,
> aiguillonant sa furie de désert en désert,
> avec son escorte caracolante
> de sables soulevés tout ruisselants de feu ;
> c'est ainsi que le Simoun galope
> sur l'océan figé des sables,
> en balançant son torse géant d'idole barbare
> sur des fuyantes croupes d'onagres affolés."

In the series of poems, however, known as *Destruction*,

> "Since there is only splendour in this word of terror
> And of crushing force like a Cyclopæan hammer,"

that boyish robustness which we have seen playing so naïvely in the romantic limbo, has attained the solidity of manhood. Finding it no longer necessary to have recourse for his subject-matter to some set theme of an Elemental War, the author reproduces the experiences of his own inner life in a new lyrical language, whose rhythm vibrates responsively to every thrill of its creator's spirit, and takes faithfully every colour of his chameleon soul.

For the poet is now reverential:

> "Tu es infinie et divine, o Mer, et je le sais
> de par le jurement de tes levres, écumantes
> de par ton jurement que répercutent de plage en plage
> les echos attentifs ainsi que des guetteurs."

now jocund:

"O Mer, mon âme est puérile et demande un jouet";

now, almost sensually, adoring:

"O toi ballerine orientale au ventre sursautant,
dont les seins sont rouges par le sang des naufrages";

now sunk in the abject ecstasies of opium:

"Derrière des vitres rouges des voix rauques criaient
'De la moelle et du sang pour les lampées d'oubli
C'est le prix des beaux rêves! . . . c'est le prix . . .'
Et j'entrais avec eux au bouge de ma chair";

now gentle:

"C'est pour nous que le Vent las de voyages eternels,
désabusé de sa vitesse de fantôme,
froissant d'une main lasse, au tréfonds de l'espace,
les velours somptueux d'un grand oreiller d'ombre
tout diamantés de larmes sidérales";

now bitterly conscious of the ironic raillery of the sea:

"Vos caresses brûlantes, vos savantes caresses,
sont pareilles à des tâtonnements d'aveugles
qui vont ramant par les couloirs d'un labyrinthe!
Vos baisers ont toujours l'acharnement infatigable
d'un dialogue enragé entre deux sourds
emprisonnés au fond d'un cachot noir."

Even more characteristic of the feverish, but not unhealthy ardour of the book is that series of ten poems entitled *Le Démon de la Vitesse*, a kind of railway journey of the modern soul. For now the poet, stoking the engines of his pounding brain with the monstrous coals of his own energy, drives his train of Æschylean images (well equipped with all the latest modern inventions) with all the record-breaking rapidity of some Trans-American express, from the "vermilion terraces of love," across "Hindu

evenings," "tyrannical rivers," "avenging forests," "milleniar torrents," and "the dusky corpulence of mountains," to traverse "the delirium of Space," and "the supreme plateaux of an absurd Ideal," to end finally in the grinding shock of a collision and all the agony of a shipwrecked vessel. It is in this series of poems that the author's wealth of imagery, always superabundant, lavishes its most profound and incessant exuberance.

For such phrases as "the drunken fulness of streaming stars in the great bed of heaven," "oh, folly, my folly, oh, Eternal Juggler," "O wind, crucified beneath the nails of the stars," "the flesh scorched in the burning tunic of a terrible desire," "the sad towns crucified on the great crossed arms of the white road" are not mere isolated flashes of poetical riches, but casual samples of an opulence displaying itself on this same grandiose scale throughout every line of every poem. Note, also, that the poet has completely fused himself with the whole scientific universe. He will thus portray a man in the terms of some dynamic entity of mechanical science, which as likely as not will itself be represented in terms of humanity. Contrast, for instance, such phrases as—

"Les géantes pneumatiques de l'Orgueil," or "train fougueux de mon âme,"

with—

"Colonnes de fumée, immenses bras de nègre,
annelés d'étincelles et de rubis sanglants."

To sum up the essential character of *Destruction*, we would say that releasing poetry from the shackles of the conventional subject-matter, the conventional language, and the conventional metres to which it

had been so long confined, it lays the hitherto untravelled lines of the speed and beauty of the whole of modern civilisation, with its all-unexplored scientific and psychological regions, as it sings the rushing rhapsody of the whole spirit of the twentieth century.

> "I bid ye pant your fury and your spleen,
> I reck not the long roarings of your wrath,
> O galloping Simoons of my ambition,
> Who heavily the city's threshold paw,
> Nor ever shall ye cross her sensual walls,
> Ye neigh in vain in my stopped ears, already
> With rosy murmurs steeped and stupefied
> (And subterranean voices of the deep),
> Like spells of freshness full of the sea's song."

The above quotation may perhaps give such readers as have not the luxury of the French language some faint shadow of the warm charm of *La Ville Charnelle*, which, at any rate from the conventional standard of ordinary æsthetic beauty, represents the zenith of M. Marinetti's poetical achievement. For in his second volume of verse, our author abandons the furious pace of his rushing modernity to sing the almost sensual beauty of a tropical town, with "the silky murmur of its African sea," its pointed "mosques of desire," and its "hills moulded like the knees of women, and swathed in the linen billows of its dazzling chalk." The swift piston rhythm of *Destruction* is exchanged for a measure which, though untrammelled by any tight convention, is often clad in the Turkish trousers of some languorous rhyme, or slides with the voluptuous swish of some blank alexandrine. But if the flood of images has abated its turbulence to a serener beauty, it has not thereby suffered any loss of volume, as is evidenced by such phrases as "les molles émeraudes de prairies infinies," "la bouche éclatée des horizons

engloutisseurs," or "jusqu'au volant trapeze de ce grand vent gymnaste."

Or take the following passage from *The Banjoes of Despair and of Adventure:*

> "Elles chantent, les benjohs hystériques et sauvages,
> comme des chattes enervées par l'odeur de l'orage.
> Ce sont des nègres qui les tiennent
> empoignées violemment, comme on tient
> une amarre que secoue la bourrasque.
> Elles miaulent, les benjohs, sous leurs doigts frénétiques,
> et la mer, en bombant son dos d'hippopotame,
> acclame leurs chansons par des flic-flacs sonores
> et des renaclements."

More aery and fantastic in their radiance are the *Little Dramas of Light*, which in the same volume play outside the walls of *La Ville Charnelle*. For pushing the pathetic fallacy to the extreme limit of pantheism, or anthropomorphism, as one cares to put it, our author constructs his miniature scenes out of the interplay of plants, elements, and the very fabrics of human invention, all participating in something of the mingled dash, despair, and desire which go to weave the somewhat complex tissue of our ultra-modern humanity.

Even the titles of a few of these delicate poems give some idea of their darting beauty—"The Foolish Vines and the Greyhound of the Firmament" (the Moon), "The Life of the Sails," "The Death of the Fortresses," "The Folly of the Little Houses," "The Dying Vessels," "The Japanese Dawn," "The Courtesans of Gold" (the Stars).

Observe, also, the eminently twentieth-century temperament of the "coquettish vessels," who, "half-clothed in their ragged sails, and playing like urchins with the incandescent ball of the sun," have yet experienced "amid the disillusioned smile of the autumn evenings" the desire for a fuller and more

tumultuous life than is afforded by the "ventriloquist soliloquies of the gurgling waters of the quays."

"C'est ainsi, c'est ainsi que les jeunes Navires
implorent affolées délivrance,
en s'esclaffant de tous leurs linges bariolés,
claquant au vent comme les lèvres brûlées de fièvre.
Leurs drisses et leurs haubans se raidissent
tels des nerfs trop tendus qui grincent de désir,
car ils veulent partir et s'en aller
vers la tristesse affreuse (qu'importe?) inconsolable
et (qu'importe?) infinie
d'avoir tout savouré et tout maudit (qu'importe?)."

We can perhaps best formulate the dynamic *élan de vie*, which pulses through every line of M. Marinetti's poems, by indulging in the perversion of the great line of Baudelaire, so that we can give to our poet for his motto:

"Je haïs la ligne qui tue le mouvement."

M. Marinetti's activity, however, is not limited to the sphere of verse. In 1905 he published *Le Roi Bombance* (*Mercure de France*), a satyric tragedy, compound of the scarcely harmonious temperaments of Rabelais and Maeterlinck, a wild extravaganza of anthropophagy and resurrection, which satirises the prominent figures in contemporary Italian politics, including the recently dead Crispi, Ferri, and Tenatri, and contains withal a profound undercurrent of sociological truth. *Poupées Electriques* (Sansot) followed in 1909, a play which, with all its brilliance and originality, somehow just misses the real dramatic pitch.

Far more significant are the *belles lettres* of *Les Dieux s'en vont D'Annunzio reste* (Sansot, 1908), with its steely dash of style and its criticism at once singularly acute and delightfully malicious of the official protagonist of all Italian culture, and the recently published *Futurisme* (Sansot, 1911).

But of all the works of M. Marinetti, the most impressive is the great prose epic, *Mafarka Le Futuriste*. It is in the three hundred pages of this novel, which describes the destructive and creative exploits of a militant and intellectual African prince, that the Futurist leader has given the most complete expression to the vehement surge of his genius. In this book, the spirits of the East and of the West strangely combine. The gross heat of an African sun beats incessantly down upon these torrid pages, yet even the most oriental passages have such a Homeric freshness of epic sweep as to render them immeasurably cleaner than the sniggering indecencies of not a few of even the more fashionable and respectable of our lady novelists. Incident follows on incident, adventure on adventure, with the magic bewilderment of some Arabian Night, an Arabian night illumined by the galvanic current of some twentieth-century genie, as it flashes image after image on the multicoloured sheet of some dancing cinematograph. The style bounds with a lithe male crispness, in comparison with which even the luxuriant and self-complacent flowers of D'Annunzio himself seem at times to offer but rank and androgynous beauties.

How admirable, for instance, is such a passage as—

"And Mafarka-el-Bey bounded forward, with great elastic steps, sliding on the voluptuous springs of the wind and rolling—like a word of victory—in the very mouth of God";

or such a perfect Homeric simile as—

"All the beloved sweetness of his vanished youth mounted in his throat, even as from the courtyard of schools there mount the joyous cries of children towards their old masters, leaning over the parapet of the terrace from which they see the flight of the vessels upon the sea";

or such a perfect description as—

"Et d'en haut descendaient les rayons des étoiles des milliers

de chaînettes dorées tintinabulantes, qui balançaient au ras de l'eau leurs tremblants reflets, innombrables veilleuses."

But the wondrous story of how Mafarka-el-Bey exhorted to the work of war the thousands of his wallowing soldiers from the putrescent bed of that dried-up lake; of how, disguising himself as an aged beggar, he visited the camp of the negroes; of the monstrous tale which he there told his Ethiopian foes; of the stratagem by which he drew the two pursuing wings of the infatuated army to the stupendous shock of an internecine collision; of how he annihilated the maddened hordes of the Hounds of the Sun with the stones flung by the mechanical Giraffes of War; of the Neronian banquet in the grotto of the Whale's Belly; of the agonised hydrophobic death of his brother Magamal, the light of his eyes; of the nocturnal journey in which he conveyed across the sea his brother's body in a sack to the land of the Hypogeans; of the Futurist Discourse which he there held; of his passing encounter with the fellahîn Habbi and Luba; of how, disdaining the more banal method of filial creation, he compelled the weavers of Lagahourso and the smiths of Milmillah to make the body of that Airgod Gazourmeh, whose spirit he had fashioned out of the glory of his own unaided brain; and of how he died exultantly, brushed away beneath the gigantic wings of his son, as it flew like some hilarious parricide into the clear infinitude, is it not all written in the pages of *Mafarka Le Futuriste?* (E. Sansot & Cie, Paris, 3 fr. 50 c.)

Note, also, the religious exultation of martial and intellectual energy, whose hoarse prayer is uttered on almost every page. For Mafarka is the prophet of that "new voluptuousness which shall have rid the world of love when he shall have founded the

religion of the concrete will and of the heroism of every single day."

And to still further exemplify his new religion of war and energy, and inspired, too, no doubt by the airy message of the Arab bullets, M. Marinetti finished on the 29th November 1911 in the trenches of Sidi-Missri, near Tripoli, the great free-verse epic of three hundred and fifty pages, entitled *The Pope's Monoplane*. The function of this poem, which is certainly the most original epic known to literary history, is to serve as an anti-clerical, an anti-pacifist, and anti-Austrian polemic. And this function it accomplishes by a technique which in its successful audacity transcends even itself. For nowhere is the free verse of Marinetti more free. New harmonies and even new dissonances are conjured up according to the emotion to be expressed and the object to be described, while the terminology of mechanics and physiology is judiciously mingled with just a trace of the old romanticism. The whole epic quite literally flies with inordinate swiftness. For the poet is, on his monoplane, careering over the heart of Italy. He takes counsel of his father the volcano, and, flying back to Rome, fishes up by means of an iron chain with a spring-trap the great polished Seal, or, as he exultantly describes it,

"Un pape, un vrai pape, le saint Pontif lui-même."

And on he flies on his missionary career, with the miserable Vicar of God dangling helplessly beneath him, now present at the debates of *Les Moucherons Politiciens*, now assisting at the tumultuous congress of *Les Syndicats Pacifistes*, now side by side with the moon, now exhorting the Italian youth to shake off their execrable lethargy, and, finally, participating in the eventual overthrow of the Austrian enemy.

This poem marks an immense advance on the earlier epic, *La Conquête des Étoiles*, to which we have already referred. It pullulates with an equal energy, but this energy is tenser and far less turgid. It is an energy, moreover, whose impetus is expended not on imaginative abstractions, but on the drastic attack of concrete political problems. As a sheer piece, too, of description, Marinetti's description of the *Battle of Monfalcone* is in our view superior to any of the military verse even of Kipling himself. *The Pope's Monoplane* is, of course, an aggressively specific example of realism in poetry. But it is a realism which, so far from clipping the wings of Pegasus, rather spurs him to higher and more strenuous flights. We may perhaps conclude our survey of this work by an endeavour to render into English a characteristic passage from the dialogue between the Poet and the Volcano.

THE VOLCANO

Ne'er have I slept; I labour endlessly,
Enriching space with many a masterpiece
    That lives and dies in a day.
Over the baking of the chiselled rocks
Upon the vitrefaction of the many-coloured sands
    I keep my watch
So well that the clay 'neath my fingers
    Will metamorphose
    To a porcelain of perfect rose,
Which I shatter with the buffets of my steam.

My accomplice is the Strait of Messina
Which dozes in the dawn, couching white and glossy
    As an Angora cat . . .
My accomplice is the Strait of Messina
Lolling like a cushion of lazy turquoise silk,
With soft Arabian words embroidered by the wake
    Of clouds and languorous sails,
    Words woven silently methinks
With a fair silver thread upon the ocean's robe.

The perfidious moon is my accomplice,
The arch-courtesan of the painted stars,
For nowhere are the moon's cajoleries
    So luring and persuasive.

And nowhere does the moon cast such assiduous eyes
To seduce the hard red funnels of the steamers,
    Those surly strollers South
    With a fat cigar in their mouth
Whose smoke they spit against the azure sky.

And nowhere does the moon throw such a tender shower
    Of soft and violet ashes,
As that which lulls to sleep the lava petrified
On the black houses hanging on my flanks.
And nowhere has the moon such poignancy
Of inundations of light and ecstasy,
    As on the gashed paths
    Carved by my surgical fire.

But woe to those who follow the bleating light of the moon,
    And the plaintive bells of the flocks,
And the bitter flutes of the shepherds whose world-weary notes
Are long, long threads that vanish in the blue!
Woe to those who refuse to make their galloping blood
Keep step with the gallop of the blood of my devastation!

And woe to those who wish to root their heads,
    To root their feet and houses
    In a craven hope of eternity!
A truce to building, for ye must encamp!
Nay, am I not shaped even as a tent
Whose truncated top fanneth my wrath?
I only love the acrobatic stars
Who balance on the rolling balls of smoke
    Wherewith I juggle!

MYSELF

I can dance to them, and juggle in mid air,
And shower my song on the reverberations
    Of thy storms that breed
    In subterranean depths! . . .
    And I descend
To hear the diapasons of thy voice.
    So make a pause

In the electrical discharges of thy tubes
That tear from thy base the underlying rocks.
Enjoin to silence all thy babbling grottoes,
That all a-flutter quiver ceaselessly.
    Gag with thick cinders
The basaltic echoes whose chorus rings thy praise.

What good are thy volcanic bombs
That serve as punctuations for the growlings of thy speech?
And what care I for the ruddy jets
    Of thine aggressive foam?
Thy deluges of mud have soiled my wings of white,
But check me not, for proof against thine avalanche
Of scoria I descend, gilded and aureoled
By all the powdery shower of thy dumbfounded gold.

It is also relevant to mention that M. Marinetti has been recently formulating new rules and principles for his new literary code. Among the more drastic phases of this stylistic revolution we would mention the employment of mathematical signs and symbols, the rebellion from too rigid and pedantic a syntax, the minimum use of the adjective and the infinitive, the opening up of new fields of images and metaphors, and the freer and more increased use of onomatopœia. These ideas are succinctly, though no doubt extravagantly, set out in the two manifestos entitled *Wireless Imagination and Words at Liberty* and *The Futurist Anti-Tradition*.

Space vetoes more than the enumeration of the other Futurist poets—Luccini, Palazzescho, Folgore, and Altomare—though we may perhaps mention the recently published *Poesie Electrichie* of Govoni, and the *A Claude Debussy* of Paolo Buzzi, which won the first prize of the first international competition of "Poesia," and which transfers into a marvellously fluid Italian verse the at once ethereal and faunish emotions of the composer's music.

But if, finally, we may speculate on the Future of

Futurism, its real prospects and its real significance are to be found in the fact that, though extravagant and aggressive, it is in essence a concentrated manifestation of the whole vital impetus of the twentieth century. Its relationship to Nietzscheanism we have already examined. Almost equally close is its affinity to the standpoints of such representative spirits of the real genius of this particular age as Verhaeren and Mr. Wells; Verhaeren, the gazer on the *Multiple Splendour* of the *Tumultuous Forces* of the *Visages of Life*, with his motto, "Life is to be mounted and not to be descended; the whole of life is in the soaring upwards," who expresses in the strenuous majesty of his verse the whole raging complex of our psychological and material civilisation; Mr. Wells, too, the glorifier of all the new machinery of our scientific fabric; Mr. Wells, who, with all his intoxication for the "gigantic syntheses of life," expresses himself most effectually by the maxim, "The world exists for and by initiative, and the method of initiative is individuality."

Even if we go to more concrete and more topical manifestations, there is not wanting evidence that the fiery blast of the Futurists is fanned by the huge bellows of our own labouring *Zeitgeist*.

If indeed we may meddle with the very latest metaphysical terminology, we would suggest that it is by a singularly brilliant and apposite stroke of intuition on the part of the newly discovered *élan de vie* that, at a time which is moving at an unprecedented rapidity, at a time when the two great brother nations of the Teutonic race are preparing their rival sacrifices for the God of War with all the mocking and drastic fraternity of a Cain and of an Abel; when the air is thick with the wings of a new and regenerated France; when the militant

mænads of both the West and the East, under the inspiration of their dashing and elusive Pythoness, are waging with foaming fanaticism a Holy War of Sex; when even one of the most responsible of our lawyers is coquetting dangerously with both the theory and the practice of the superior ethical value of Active Resistance; when the most venerable of our Lord Justices recently interpolated a homily on the Law of Change into the middle of an otherwise purely legal judgment; when the two young, but patriotic *condottieri* of either political party are fast leaping into a more and more aggressive prominence; when the insurgent masses of our industrial proletariat have made a vehement and not entirely unsuccessful charge against existing economic fabric of the country; when Mr. Thomas Hardy has attended, in the pages of even the *Fortnightly Review*, the funeral of the old God of pity, and when Bergsonism, judiciously advertised in the masquerade of a religious revival, has replaced the old Eternal Absolute with the creative activity of an endless Movement, the Futurists should now exalt the sublime vehemence of war, and the aggressive fury of youth, while M. Marinetti chants the strident hallelujahs of the new God of sweat and agony and tension, and Signor Russolo and his *confrères* exhibit to us in the actual canvases of the Sackville Galleries the rampant hordes of rebellion and the painting of Movement itself.

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